



Transformational leadership of principals in learning communities, as an effort to improve teacher professionalism competencies

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Abstract

This study investigates the transformational leadership role of school principals in forming learning communities and improving teacher competencies at Senior High School. This research uses qualitative research methods with data collection tools like interviews, observations, and documentation. Four main aspects of transformational leadership, namely Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration, are the focus of research. The results showed that the headmaster of this school plays a central role in motivating teachers to continuously improve their competence through the learning community. Transformational leadership creates an environment that supports teacher growth and development by providing examples, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention. This has a positive impact on morale, teaching quality, and the relationship between principals and teachers. Thus, transformational leadership and learning communities play a key role in improving the quality of education at Senior High School. This research provides useful insights for stakeholders in education to understand how transformational leadership can support teacher competency development.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Learning Communities; Teacher Competencies

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1. Introduction

Education has an important role in facilitating the learning process, which involves aspects such as knowledge, skills, values, ethics, beliefs, and behavior of individuals (Suardi, 2018) In this context, educational success can be measured through several factors, including the participation and contribution of educators, students, the content of learning materials, teaching methods used, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure (Sibagariang et al., 2021)

Educators or teachers play a crucial role in the success of an education system. This is a natural thing, considering that teachers are individuals who have direct involvement in educational interactions, both as recipients and givers of knowledge. Regardless of the quality and perfection of the educational curriculum, the availability of adequate educational facilities, and the high enthusiasm for student learning, without being accompanied by adequate teacher abilities, everything will lose its true meaning (Damanik, 2019)

In the modern era that continues to develop, with rapid advances in science and technology, as well as constant changes in the dynamics of learning, teachers are required to adapt and continue to develop themselves. This is where the role of education leadership has a very important relevance. From various studies that have been conducted, transformational leadership has been recognized as one of the most effective leadership styles in facing challenges (Barnett et al., 2001). (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) State that transformational leadership has the potential to increase the level of commitment among teachers. (Walumbwa et al., 2005) As stated in 20 years of leadership research, it has been proven that transformational leadership can effectively increase the level of commitment and satisfaction of its members. And in the context of education, transformational leadership carried out by school principals can be a key driver in improving teacher competence and professionalism.

In an effort to improve teacher competence and professionalism, the formation of learning communities is a strategy that is increasingly receiving attention. Learning communities aim to bring together individuals in order to achieve a common goal. From the point of view of sociology, a group is an entity in which individuals communicate and establish relationships, which in turn allows them to achieve certain goals through interaction within the group. Groups form when individuals interact and communicate in daily life, participate in discussions, and share stories. Through these interactions, they can feel the relevance and impact of the topics they discuss, both in the school setting and outside the school, which often results in a deeper understanding of issues that can be discussed together (Ramly, 2021). Learning communities provide a platform for teachers

to share knowledge, experience, and best practices. This creates an environment where teachers can constantly learn and develop.

In this article, we will further explore the concept of transformational leadership in an educational context, and how principals can play a key role in facilitating the formation of effective learning communities. We will also discuss previous research that supports the relationship between transformational leadership and the development of learning community success in improving teacher competence. Thus, this article is expected to provide useful insights for stakeholders in the world of education, including school principals, teachers, and education policy makers, in a joint effort to improve the quality of education.

2. Method

2.1. Approaches and types of research methods

To answer questions that arise from the background of the problem, the approach applied in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of approach. This approach aims to detail the data that has been collected, analyze it, and provide interpretation. As explained by (Suwandi, 2008), qualitative research is a research conducted based on paradigms, strategies, and models that are qualitative. Meanwhile, a descriptive approach, according to the definition (Suwandi, 2008) involves the written or spoken word of the individual as well as observable behavior. Include in these subsections the information essential to comprehend and replicate the study. Insufficient detail leaves the reader with questions; too much detail burdens the reader with irrelevant information. Consider using appendices and/or a supplemental website for more detailed information.

2.2. Data collection techniques

According to (Sujarweni, 2014), Data collection techniques are methods used by researchers to uncover or filter qualitative information from informants according to the scope of research. Meanwhile, in this study, data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. Data collection was conducted at State High School 13 Banjarmasin City, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. Based on views (Fathoni, 2006), data collection can be carried out in various ways, such as:

1. Observation is a method of data collection carried out through observation, which includes observing and recording the situation or behavior of the object in focus. To identify the transformational leadership role of the principal in the

learning community, researchers observed the continuity of the learning community in the school.

2. Interviewing is a data collection method in which information is obtained through a one-way oral dialogue, with questions asked by the interviewee. In this interview stage, researchers interacted with the principal, learning community coordinator and teachers who participated in the learning community to get to know the principal's transformational leadership to improve teacher competence. Interviews were conducted with the principal, vice principal and teacher representatives.
3. Documentation research is a way to collect data by examining records containing personal information about the research subject, similar to the approach used by a psychologist when examining a client's personal developmental record. At this stage of documentation, researchers will inspect documents related to the implementation of the learning community. Sampling procedures

2.3. Research instruments

In qualitative research, the role of researchers is very complex. Researchers act as planners, implementers of data collection, data analysts, data interpreters, and finally as presenters of their research results. In the context of this study, the researcher is the central element or main tool of research.

2.4. Data analysis techniques

Data analysis in this study was carried out throughout the research process, starting from data collection to the stage of preparing reports and drawing conclusions. The process of qualitative data analysis takes place interactively and continuously until the data reaches a saturation level. There are various data analysis models in qualitative research, and in this study, researchers adopted the data analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman. Data analysis activities according to the Miles and Huberman approach involve data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification (Milles & Huberman, 1992)

1. Data reduction.

Data reduction is the initial stage in the data analysis process. In this stage, researchers group the data that has been collected during the study based on research questions. This data grouping aims to facilitate the presentation of data to be carried out by researchers.

2. Presentation data

After simplifying the data from the results of the collection, the researcher then presents the data in the form of a description that follows the aspects that are the focus of the study, and is arranged sequentially. Data is analyzed and described after being categorized first based on the research problem.

3. Conclusion drawing

The final stage in the data analysis process is to produce conclusions by verifying (the process of proving the truth) to ensure the validity of the research results.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the research obtained were based on searches related to transformational leadership of school principals in learning communities, which aims to improve teacher competence in four aspects of transformational leadership. Here are the findings of this study:

Tabel.1 Interview Grid

Variabel	Indicators	Question
Principal's Transformational Leadership Style	Idealized influence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the Headmaster set a positive example and serve as a role model for teachers in the learning community? Can you provide concrete examples of actions or attitudes that reflect Idealized Influence? 2. In leading a learning community, how does the Headmaster create an atmosphere where teachers feel motivated and inspired to improve their competencies? Are there any specific initiatives or programs that show ideal influence?
	Inspirational Motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do Principals integrate inspirational motivation in learning communities to improve teacher morale and performance? 2. What types of activities or programs have the Principal implemented to create in

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. inspirational motivation among the teaching staff? 4. How do Principals build partnerships with teachers to increase inspirational motivation in achieving common goals in the learning community?
	Intellectual Stimulation (Intellectual Simulation).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do principals train teacher intelligence simulations in learning communities?
	Individualized Consideration (Perhatian Individu)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the headmaster ensure individual attention to the needs and development of each teacher in the learning community? 2. How does the headmaster identify each teacher's individual needs and expectations in an effort to improve their competence? 3. Has the headmaster provided specific training or support to assist teachers in identifying and achieving their individual professional development goals?

Based on the results of the researcher's search, the *idealized aspect of Influence* shown through the leadership of the principal to improve teacher competence through the learning community is the leader's behavior in the form of example and being able to transmit *uswah* in the learning community, so that this behavior is visible to educators. The behavior of the the principal seeks to provide a real good example in the hope that educators will emulate this example.

The example shown by the the principal is through competency development by holding learning communities and always being present in learning communities to share education and training that is continuously improved and carried out continuously.

Other search results show that in the transformational leadership of the the principal, charisma plays a key role in efforts to improve the quality of educators by empowering educators to have a high work ethic. This work ethic reflects the characteristics of transformational leadership by expressing productivity through the

ability to optimize the utilization of the available learning community, resulting in optimal results.

These findings are in line with the perspective expressed by Sinamo in a study conducted by (Saleh & Utomo, 2018) which states that work ethic involves a number of positive behaviors rooted in strong awareness, fundamental beliefs, and total commitment to a comprehensive work paradigm.

The Qur'an and Hadith give instructions to human beings, especially Muslims, to encourage themselves to work hard and try their best. This underscores the importance of having a high work ethic in order to achieve success in the life of the world, as well as prepare for the afterlife.

Opinion (Saifulloh, 2010) Linking religion and work ethic, emphasizing that religion can have a positive influence on an individual's work ethic. Religion has the potential to motivate its people to achieve high work performance. Conversely, if religious principles are not able to encourage individuals to improve their work ethic, this can have a negative impact on work productivity.

The leadership of the principal has created *Idealized Influence* (charisma), which is interpreted as an attractive and passionate personal charm. Our observations and interviews show that the principal has a strong moral standard, which is to strive to always prioritize human values. They also show commitment to religious values in their actions and appearance. High spirit, determination in carrying out commitment, high work ethic, and dedication in realizing the vision and mission of the school they lead and these are leadership traits that are reflected in the personality of the principal. The positive influence of the leadership of the principal has a good impact on educators.

The educators also recognized the charisma possessed by the principal through their determination and the respect they inspired, which ultimately created loyalty among educators. This is in accordance with Max Weber's view (Bass, 1988) In the concept of leadership charisma, a person cannot be considered to have charisma unless his followers acknowledge and validate the charismatic trait.

In line with Wahyusumidjo's views in (Anwar et al., 2022) which states that charisma is the same as having personal authority. Educators feel a high respect for transformational leadership, and this is an important factor in shaping educators' willingness to follow the leader's direction and vision to achieve common goals. In view (Lickona, 1997) Strong respect is reflected in the respect a person gives to the values and principles they hold, so that whatever exists in the context of that leadership is considered an integral part of who they are.

In addition, the principal also created a positive impact by always being on time, even earlier than other fellow teachers, as well as with extraordinary tenacity reflected in the

fact that he was always the last to go home. The principal also set a significant example in the context of good and correct teaching methods. Not only acting as an administrator, but he is also actively involved in providing concrete examples of effective and quality teaching. This reflects his commitment to improving the quality of education. During the face of obstacles or obstacles, the principal showed a proactive attitude by providing transparent information to all relevant parties. This action reflects his responsibility to his duties and leadership role. Through clear communication, the principal not only explained the reason for his departure, but also ensured that his responsibilities remained well fulfilled.

Inspirational Motivation

From the results of research data collection, the principal always shows behaviors that encourage transformation in improving the quality of educators through sources of inspiration and motivation. The principal consistently inspires and motivates their educators, reminding them to always follow the schedule of the learning community in order to make changes that are beneficial and have a positive impact. The principal also provides support when educators face obstacles that hinder their development, especially obstacles in participating in learning communities or in terms of educating. As well as constantly reminding about the goals, vision, and mission of the institution.

The results are in line with Burns' view of transformational leadership as a process of social influence, in which leaders and followers engage in a shared process to increase each other's levels of morality and motivation (Bass et al., 1987). The behavior of the head of SMAN 13 Banjarmasin who motivates educators to continue to improve their performance in accordance with the tasks and standards set has a significant impact on the quality of educators (Anwar & Umar, 2021). The study's findings support previous research showing that transformational leadership that provides active motivation improves members' performance (Nurmiyanti & Candra, 2019).

In addition, the principal also provides motivation in the form of lectures or knowledge that inspires their members, with a greater emphasis on values and loyalty. These findings are in line with the view that inspirational motivation is used as an approach to influence and motivate members of educational organizations (Muhith, 2013). The work motivation of educators is the factor that pushes them to achieve certain goals through the execution of tasks. This motivation provides energy to work and directs activities during work, as well as helping teachers understand the relationship between organizational goals and their personal goals (Anwar, 2019).

Transformational leadership behaves behaviors that can generate motivation for the achievement of group goals (Marginingsih, 2016). This statement is in accordance with the findings at the research location that always provide motivation through the provision of complex, challenging, initiative, risky tasks so that members become more

responsible and diligent. In each learning community meeting, educators or teachers are given the task of making reports on the results of discussions in learning community meetings that have been carried out. In addition, the principal motivates educators without intimidating or authoritarian. This is in line with previous research that the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad SAW united his people through persuasiveness, approach, diplomacy, consensus dialogue, and reconciliation rather than by means of security approach, intimidation, and coercion (Sakdiah, 2016).

Intellectual Stimulation (Intellectual Stimulation)

Based on the results of searches conducted by researchers, it was found that *Intellectual stimulation* is a characteristic possessed by the principal. The results showed that the principal encouraged his educators by providing stimuli aimed at generating creativity in the learning process in the classroom. They stimulate intellectual educators by holding learning communities and various development activities, such as training and seminars, as well as workshops, aimed at improving their competence. Educators play a direct role in interaction with students, therefore, they must always have the spirit to continue learning, creating, and achieving achievements. The intellectual development of educators is considered an important part of educator professionalism.

The transformational leadership of the principal in improving the quality of educators involves stimulating educators to develop their four basic competencies, namely social, personality, professional, and social competencies. However, the proactive, creative, and professional leadership attitude shown by the principal will encourage educators to imitate their behavior. This will increase the desire and morale of educators, and encourage positive thinking in carrying out their professional responsibilities (Anwar, 2021)

This finding is in line with the results of research conducted by Dong I. Jung which highlights the importance of intellectual stimulation (Jung, 2001). Through intellectual stimulation to his subordinates, new methods of achieving organizational goals are explored. Berson and Avolio also state that intellectual stimulation can encourage followers to seek innovative solutions to the challenges faced (Berson & Avolio, 2004).

In the context of Islam, the teaching encourages people to continue to innovate in their lives. The Holy Prophetsa once said that showing kindness to others will bring rewards, such as the reward of those who do it. The Qur'an also allows people to make *ikhtiyariyyah* decisions, that is, decisions that are their responsibility, and they have the ability to do so (Machasin, 1996) Intellectual stimulation in the context of leadership is defined as actions that aim to increase individual and organizational awareness of the

complexities they face. The actions of the leader can affect the awareness of all members of the organization in achieving the vision, mission, and goals of the organization.

In the case of the principal, intellectual stimulation is carried out through learning communities. The principal can conduct discussions to solve problems in schools in the learning community with the aim of increasing intellectual capacity and teacher competence. This is in line with the principal's role as a manager responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of learning and measuring the results achieved as a basis for quality improvement at a later stage (Fadhli, 2016)

Individual Considerations (Individual Attention)

The search results in this study are related to aspects *Individual considerations* in the transformational leadership of the principal in the learning community to improve the competence of educators is to give personal attention to educators. The principal paid special attention to the obstacles and limitations faced by educators. They encourage educators to discuss and participate in learning communities. The results of interviews with educators as informants showed that the attention given by The principal made educators feel valued and cared for. The findings are in line with previous research showing that transformational leadership makes followers feel trusted, respected, and liked without the need to resort to punishment and rewards (Kouzes & Posner, 2023)

Other findings in this study showed that the principal showed individual attention characteristics by considering and identifying the needs of educators in schools. This is in line with research on the impact of transformational leadership on organizational control systems, which shows that transformational leaders use significant individual consideration, which in turn helps subordinates reach their maximum potential (Nguyen et al., 2017)

Findings related to aspects *Individual considerations* have a positive impact, which is to create emotional closeness between the principal and educators. This is in line with research showing that by providing individualized attention, leaders build one-on-one relationships with their followers, understanding and considering the needs, skills, and aspirations of diverse individuals (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009)

Based on the search, transformational leadership carried out by the principal focuses on the needs of educators by identifying needs and analyzing the skills of educator resources. The aspect of individual attention, corresponding to Sosik and Avolio, is the behavior of the leader who pays attention to individual differences in the needs of his subordinates for growth and development (Sosik et al., 1998). Individual attention in this context is defined as the actions of transformational leaders who reflect on themselves in the context of the continuity and sustainability of the educational organization they lead. Efforts to achieve these goals through identifying the needs of subordinates by providing

coaching, guidance, and training through learning communities and appreciation of the performance achieved by educators.

4. Conclusions

In this study, the results of a search show that transformational leadership carried out by school principals has a crucial role in improving teacher competence through the formation of learning communities. Based on the results of the study, four aspects of transformational leadership, namely Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration are the basis for creating an environment that supports improving teacher competence.

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