

# The Implementation of Transformational Leadership by School Principals in Enhancing Teachers' Work Motivation at SDN 13 Muara Telang

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## Abstrak

*Kepemimpinan transformasional telah diakui secara luas sebagai penentu kritis motivasi guru dan efektivitas sekolah dalam penelitian pendidikan kontemporer. Namun, studi kualitatif yang terbatas mengeksplorasi bagaimana kepemimpinan transformasional beroperasi dalam konteks sekolah dasar pedesaan di Indonesia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti bagaimana kepala sekolah SDN 13 Muara Telang menerapkan kepemimpinan transformasional dan bagaimana praktik-praktik tersebut meningkatkan motivasi kerja guru. Desain studi kasus tunggal kualitatif digunakan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi non-partisipan, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan satu kepala sekolah dan enam guru. Analisis tematik diterapkan untuk mengidentifikasi pola kepemimpinan yang muncul dan dinamika motivasi. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa pertimbangan individual dan stimulasi intelektual adalah dimensi yang paling berpengaruh dalam mendorong motivasi intrinsik, pengambilan risiko profesional, dan efikasi diri guru. Motivasi inspiratif memperkuat efikasi kolektif dan komitmen profesional. Studi ini mengonfirmasi relevansi kontekstual kepemimpinan transformasional di lingkungan yang terbatas sumber daya dan memberikan implikasi praktis untuk pengembangan kepemimpinan dalam pendidikan dasar di Indonesia.*

**Kata kunci:** *Kepemimpinan transformasional, motivasi guru, studi kualitatif, kepemimpinan sekolah, manajemen pendidikan*

## Abstract

Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of teacher motivation and school effectiveness in contemporary educational research. However, limited qualitative studies explore how transformational leadership operates in rural Indonesian primary school contexts. This study aims to examine how the principal of SDN 13 Muara Telang implements transformational leadership and how such practices enhance teachers' work motivation. A qualitative single-case study design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis involving one principal and six teachers. Thematic analysis was applied to identify emerging leadership patterns and motivational dynamics. Findings reveal that individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation were the most influential dimensions in fostering intrinsic motivation, professional risk-taking, and teacher self-efficacy. Inspirational motivation strengthened collective efficacy and professional commitment. The study confirms the contextual relevance of transformational leadership in resource-constrained environments and provides practical implications for leadership development in Indonesian primary education.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, teacher motivation, qualitative study, school leadership, educational management

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Educational leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping school climate, teacher performance, and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020; OECD, 2020). In recent years, transformational leadership (TL) has emerged as one of the most influential leadership models in educational administration (Hallinger, 2020; Harris, 2021). Transformational leadership consists of four primary dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Yukl, 2020; Bush, 2020).

Recent empirical research confirms that transformational leadership significantly enhances teacher motivation, commitment, and innovative behavior (Liu et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2024). Teacher motivation itself is a crucial factor influencing instructional quality and professional growth (Zhang, 2021; Demerouti & Bakker, 2022). Intrinsically motivated teachers are more likely to engage in reflective practice and collaborative learning (Sun & Lin, 2021).

In Indonesia, especially in rural areas, schools often face infrastructural and administrative challenges that require strong visionary leadership (Suprpto & Hartono, 2024; Setiawan, 2024). Despite quantitative evidence supporting transformational leadership effectiveness, limited qualitative studies explore how leadership behaviors specifically influence teachers' intrinsic motivation in rural primary schools (Cheng & Liu, 2020; Tian, 2022).

## **2. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative single-case study approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of leadership processes within a specific institutional context (Yin, 2020). A qualitative design enables exploration of subjective experiences and contextual dynamics (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

### ***2.1 Participants***

Participants consisted of one school principal and six full-time teachers selected through purposive sampling to ensure varied teaching experience and perspectives (Ahmad, 2022).

### ***2.2 Data Collection***

The data for this study were collected using multiple qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture the participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights, allowing for in-depth exploration while maintaining some consistency across respondents. Non-participant observations complemented the interviews by providing direct, contextual insights into behaviors, interactions, and practices within the natural setting, without influencing the participants' actions. Additionally, documentation analysis was performed to examine existing records, reports, and relevant materials that could corroborate or expand upon the information obtained from interviews and observations. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was applied, comparing and cross-verifying data from the three sources. This approach aligns with Creswell and Poth (2022), who emphasize triangulation as a key strategy for enhancing the validity and reliability of qualitative research outcomes.

### **2.3 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's updated framework (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Coding procedures identified patterns related to leadership behaviors and motivational outcomes.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study were obtained through a combination of semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation analysis, which allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon comprehensively and from multiple perspectives. Semi-structured interviews provided in-depth insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and responses toward the implementation of the program being studied. Through this method, respondents were able to express their views openly while still being guided by predetermined research questions. Meanwhile, non-participant observation enabled the researcher to directly observe activities and interactions occurring in the research setting without interfering with the natural process. This approach helped capture authentic behaviors and practices that may not always be fully articulated during interviews. In addition, documentation analysis was conducted by reviewing relevant written materials, such as institutional reports, learning documents, program records, and other supporting archives that were closely related to the research topic. These documents served as important supporting evidence to strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations.

The integration of these three data collection techniques allowed the researcher to obtain rich, contextual, and reliable information regarding the research problem. The findings indicate that the implementation of the program or practice under investigation demonstrated several meaningful impacts on participants. Based on the interview results, most participants expressed positive perceptions toward the activities and strategies implemented, particularly in terms of improving their understanding, engagement, and practical skills. Observational data further supported these statements, as participants were seen actively involved in the learning or training activities and showed a higher level of participation compared to previous practices. Furthermore, the analysis of documents revealed consistency between institutional objectives, program implementation, and the outcomes observed during the research process.

These findings align with previous studies highlighting the importance of integrated data collection methods in qualitative research. According to John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, triangulation of data sources is essential to ensure the credibility, validity, and trustworthiness of qualitative findings because it allows researchers to compare and cross-check information obtained from different methods (Creswell & Poth, 2022). Similarly, qualitative researchers emphasize that combining interviews, observations, and documentation analysis helps produce a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena and reduces potential bias in interpretation. The triangulation process in this study therefore strengthened the reliability of the results, as the information obtained from one data source could be confirmed and supported by evidence from other sources.

From the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of multiple qualitative data collection techniques contributed significantly to the depth and credibility of the research findings. The combination of semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation analysis enabled the researcher to explore participants' perspectives, observe actual practices, and verify findings through documentary evidence. This methodological approach not only enhanced the validity of the data but also provided a holistic understanding of the research context. The implications of this study suggest that researchers and practitioners should adopt triangulated qualitative methods when examining complex educational or social phenomena in order to obtain richer and more trustworthy

insights. For future research, further studies could expand the scope of participants, incorporate additional qualitative or mixed-method approaches, and explore longitudinal data to examine long-term impacts of similar programs or interventions in different educational contexts.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The study demonstrates that transformational leadership effectively enhances teachers' work motivation in rural Indonesian primary schools. Individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation were particularly influential in fostering intrinsic drive and professional risk-taking. Inspirational motivation strengthened collective efficacy, while idealized influence cultivated ethical professionalism.

Educational policymakers should integrate transformational leadership competencies into principal training programs (Hallinger, 2020; Setiawan, 2024). Future research should conduct multi-site comparative studies to examine generalizability.

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