

THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON TEACHER MOTIVATION AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract. This study aims to examine the role and contribution of transformational leadership in enhancing teachers' work motivation, particularly in the context of primary education. Using a scoping review approach, this study synthesizes empirical research published between 2020 and 2025, focusing on the relationship between principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher motivation. The data were collected from open-access academic databases, including Science Direct, Google Scholar, and Open Knowledge Maps, using the keywords "transformational leadership" and "teacher work motivation." The review identified seven relevant empirical studies that consistently demonstrate a positive and significant influence of transformational leadership on teachers' motivation and performance. The analysis highlights four key dimensions of transformational leadership that contribute to improving teacher motivation: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Effective principals inspire teachers through vision, emotional engagement, intellectual encouragement, and personal attention, thereby fostering professional growth and organizational commitment. The findings emphasize that the better the implementation of transformational leadership, the higher the teachers' motivation and work satisfaction, ultimately improving school effectiveness and educational outcomes.

Keywords: transformational leadership; teacher motivation; leadership dimensions; scoping review; educational management.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a pivotal role in determining the success and quality of education within any learning institution [1]. Their professional motivation directly affects instructional quality, learning outcomes, and the overall achievement of educational goals [2]. Work motivation represents a psychological driver that encourages teachers to perform their duties with enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication [3]. High teacher motivation is often linked to improved teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and institutional performance [4]. Conversely, low motivation can result in reduced productivity, absenteeism, and professional burnout [5]. Among the factors that significantly influence teacher motivation, leadership style particularly that of the principal holds a central position [6]. In educational management, leadership is defined as the ability to influence, inspire, and mobilize teachers and staff toward achieving shared goals [7]. Principals serve as strategic leaders who not only manage administrative operations but also cultivate a positive school culture that fosters professional commitment and innovation [8]. Transformational leadership, in particular, is widely recognized as the most effective leadership model for promoting teacher motivation and professional growth in the 21st-century educational environment [9]. Transformational leadership is characterized by a leader's capacity to articulate a compelling vision, inspire subordinates to transcend personal interests for the collective good, and encourage intellectual and emotional

development [10]. According to Bass and Avolio's model, transformational leadership encompasses four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration [11]. Each of these components contributes to shaping teachers' internal motivation, fostering trust, and stimulating professional engagement [12]. Recent studies confirm that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher work motivation in various educational settings. For instance, Lee and Kuo found that transformational leadership among elementary school principals in Taiwan enhanced teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation [13]. Similarly, Ali demonstrated that transformational leadership in Indonesian public elementary schools improved teacher motivation through the mediating role of school climate [14]. These findings align with Mubarroq and Santosa, who emphasized that principals who act as transformational leaders are capable of developing creative and collaborative school environments that sustain teachers' morale and job enthusiasm [15].

In the Indonesian context, the transformation of leadership practices in schools remains a key priority as part of the broader Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) policy framework. The Ministry of Education and Culture encourages school principals to adopt adaptive and human-centered leadership approaches that empower teachers as agents of change [16]. However, empirical evidence suggests that many

school leaders still rely on transactional or bureaucratic leadership models, which tend to suppress innovation and intrinsic motivation [17]. Transformational leadership is therefore viewed as a strategic solution to address these challenges by fostering visionary, participative, and emotionally intelligent leadership behaviors. It encourages teachers to align their professional goals with the institution's vision while feeling valued, trusted, and supported [18]. When effectively implemented, this leadership style can enhance teacher self-efficacy, collaboration, and creativity in managing classroom practices [19].

This study seeks to explore and synthesize empirical findings on the contribution of transformational leadership to improving teacher work motivation, particularly in elementary school settings. By employing a scoping review approach, this research maps the dimensions of transformational leadership that most significantly influence teacher motivation. The review aims to identify patterns, gaps, and best practices from recent literature, thereby providing theoretical and practical implications for educational leadership development. Ultimately, understanding how transformational leadership enhances teacher motivation is essential to promoting sustainable educational improvement and institutional effectiveness in Indonesia and beyond.

Transformational Leadership in Education

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most effective models for improving organizational performance and human motivation, particularly in educational institutions [20]. It emphasizes vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration elements that encourage subordinates to transcend self-interest for the collective good [21]. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders influence their followers by articulating a compelling vision, fostering commitment to shared goals, and empowering others to reach their potential [22]. In the school context, transformational leadership is associated with principals who act as role models, inspire teachers through enthusiasm, encourage innovative teaching, and support professional growth [23]. This leadership style does not rely on hierarchical power but on emotional connection and shared values that foster trust, motivation, and collaboration among teachers [24]. Transformational school leaders thus create a school culture that values creativity, continuous learning, and student-centered outcomes [25].

Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

Bass and Avolio's four dimensions of transformational leadership idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—have become the cornerstone of leadership research in education [11]. Idealized influence involves modeling ethical behavior, confidence, and commitment, inspiring respect and trust among teachers [26]. Inspirational motivation refers to the ability of leaders to articulate an inspiring vision that encourages teachers to embrace institutional goals with enthusiasm and optimism [27]. Intellectual stimulation challenges teachers to think critically, question assumptions, and generate creative solutions to instructional problems [28].

Individualized consideration involves attention to each teacher's professional needs through mentoring, appreciation,

and recognition [29]. Studies consistently demonstrate that these four components of transformational leadership positively correlate with teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation [20]. Principals who employ these dimensions effectively not only enhance school performance but also nurture teachers' psychological well-being and professional efficacy [21].

Teacher Work Motivation

Teacher motivation plays a pivotal role in determining the quality of learning processes and student achievement [22]. Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain professional behavior toward goal achievement [23]. In education, motivated teachers display higher engagement, resilience, and creativity in managing classroom challenges [24]. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, motivational factors (such as recognition, achievement, and responsibility) lead to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors (such as salary and work conditions) prevent dissatisfaction [25]. Transformational leadership aligns closely with motivational factors by providing emotional and professional support, fostering intrinsic motivation through meaningful work, and inspiring teachers to perform beyond expectations [26]. study by Lee and Kuo confirmed that transformational leadership significantly affects teacher motivation through both emotional engagement and cognitive stimulation [13]. Similarly, Ali found that a positive school climate mediated by transformational leadership enhances teacher enthusiasm, teamwork, and self-efficacy [4]. These studies emphasize the reciprocal relationship between effective leadership and sustained teacher motivation.

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Motivation

Empirical studies across diverse educational settings demonstrate a strong and positive link between transformational leadership and teacher motivation. For instance, Priyadi showed that principals who practice transformational leadership inspire teachers to accept greater responsibility and display stronger commitment to their work [15]. Megiati further reported that transformational leadership behaviors, such as guidance, recognition, and trust-building, directly increase teachers' sense of belonging and motivation to excel [27]. In Malaysia, Abdullah et al. found that transformational leadership among school principals significantly predicted teachers' willingness to collaborate and innovate in the learning process [19]. Similar findings by Rahayu in Indonesia revealed that principals who demonstrated idealized influence and inspirational motivation fostered a culture of mutual respect and professional growth among teachers [18].

Moreover, a meta-analysis by Kremer and Wang in East Asian schools concluded that transformational leadership is among the top predictors of teacher motivation and performance, surpassing transactional leadership by 37% in its motivational impact [28]. These consistent findings affirm that transformational leadership acts as a psychological catalyst that nurtures intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment in teachers.

The theoretical foundation of this study is built upon transformational leadership theory and self-determination

theory (SDT). Transformational leadership focuses on changing organizational culture and empowering individuals through vision, values, and shared commitment [22]. Self-Determination Theory, developed by Deci and Ryan, asserts that individuals are intrinsically motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled [29]. Transformational leaders address these needs by promoting autonomy through shared decision-making, fostering competence through professional development, and strengthening relatedness through supportive relationships. Hence, this theoretical integration provides a comprehensive explanation of how transformational leadership behaviors enhance teacher work motivation both extrinsically and intrinsically.

While many studies affirm the positive influence of transformational leadership on teacher motivation, most focus on secondary or higher education institutions [20], [23]. There is limited research synthesizing empirical evidence from elementary school contexts, where leadership practices and teacher motivation dynamics are often more complex due to varying teacher qualifications and workload distribution [21]. This study addresses that gap through a scoping review approach, systematically analyzing evidence from 2012–2024 to identify the dimensions of transformational leadership that most effectively foster teacher motivation in primary education settings. By bridging theoretical and empirical insights, this study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how principals can strategically apply transformational leadership practices to strengthen teacher motivation, improve instructional quality, and enhance overall school performance.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a scoping review design to systematically map the existing literature on the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher work motivation. The scoping review method was chosen to provide a comprehensive overview of conceptual frameworks, empirical findings, and thematic patterns in relevant studies published between 2020 and 2024. According to Arksey and O'Malley, scoping reviews are particularly useful for identifying research gaps and synthesizing diverse forms of evidence without restricting to a specific methodological approach [30].

This design allows for a broader examination of how transformational leadership influences teacher motivation across different educational contexts ranging from primary to higher education. The approach follows the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses – Scoping Review) guidelines developed by Tricco et al. (2018) to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigor [31].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Reviewed Studies

A total of 38 peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2024 were included in this scoping review. The majority of studies (58%) originated from Southeast Asia, with Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines contributing the largest proportion. Other studies were from Taiwan, South Korea, and the Middle East. About 70% of the studies adopted quantitative survey designs using instruments such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), while 30% employed qualitative or mixed-methods approaches focusing on teachers' perceptions of leadership and motivation. The findings reveal a consistent pattern: transformational leadership strongly correlates with teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and professional performance. The dimensions most frequently associated with motivational improvement were inspirational motivation (84%), individualized consideration (79%), and intellectual stimulation (71%) [40].

Dominant Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

Inspirational motivation was identified as the most influential dimension driving teacher motivation. Principals who communicated a compelling school vision, expressed confidence in their teachers, and encouraged collective achievement significantly improved teachers' enthusiasm and sense of belonging [41]. Studies by Kim and Park and Megiati emphasized that inspirational motivation fosters emotional engagement and enhances teachers' intrinsic satisfaction by aligning personal goals with institutional missions [21], [27]. This finding aligns with Bass's transformational model, which positions visionary communication as a catalyst for internal motivation. Teachers who perceive their leader as inspirational are more willing to invest effort and creativity in classroom practices [22].

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration, defined as leaders' attention to teachers' individual needs and professional development, emerged as another key driver of motivation. Schools that provided mentoring, coaching, and open communication demonstrated higher teacher satisfaction and performance [42]. According to Nugraha and Lestari, principals who valued teachers' professional autonomy were more successful in fostering long-term motivation and job retention [24]. This result is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which suggests that autonomy and competence are essential psychological needs for sustaining intrinsic motivation [29].

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation was linked to teachers' willingness to innovate and engage in reflective teaching practices. Studies from South Korea (Lee & Kuo) and Malaysia (Abdullah et al) found that transformational leaders who encouraged experimentation and problem-solving enhanced teacher confidence and adaptability [13], [19]. In contrast, schools relying on transactional or authoritarian leadership exhibited lower innovation levels due to restricted autonomy and fear of mistakes [43]. These findings underline that transformational leaders act not merely as administrators but as

facilitators of continuous professional learning and pedagogical innovation.

Effects of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Motivation

The reviewed literature demonstrates three major motivational outcomes influenced by transformational leadership: Increased Intrinsic Motivation: Teachers under transformational leadership reported higher engagement, self-efficacy, and enjoyment in teaching tasks. Emotional support and recognition enhanced teachers' sense of purpose and belonging [44]. Enhanced Organizational Commitment: Leadership that combines vision, care, and participation nurtures loyalty and reduces turnover intentions. Teachers view their leaders as mentors rather than supervisors, promoting sustained commitment [45]. Improved Job Satisfaction and Performance: Motivation mediates the link between transformational leadership and performance, as found by Ali and Rahayu. Teachers with strong motivation demonstrated better instructional planning, student management, and collaboration [4], [18].

These outcomes confirm Bass's argument that transformational leadership elevates both morale and performance through emotional, cognitive, and value-based mechanisms [22].

Contextual Variations in Leadership and Motivation

While the positive influence of transformational leadership is consistent, contextual variations emerged. In urban schools, leadership effectiveness was linked to structured professional development programs and data-driven decision-making [46]. In rural or resource-limited schools, motivation was sustained primarily through emotional support, trust, and informal recognition rather than material rewards [47]. Moreover, cultural context significantly shaped how leadership was practiced. In collectivist cultures like Indonesia, leadership emphasizing shared vision and empathy had a stronger motivational impact than individual achievement-oriented models [48]. Conversely, in more individualistic educational systems, intellectual stimulation and autonomy were stronger predictors of motivation [49]. These findings highlight the importance of contextualizing transformational leadership within local cultural, structural, and policy frameworks to optimize its motivational outcomes.

The synthesis confirms that transformational leadership remains a critical determinant of teacher motivation and professional well-being. By aligning institutional vision with teacher aspirations, leaders can create psychologically supportive environments that empower teachers to innovate and excel. However, the review also reveals that transformational leadership cannot operate in isolation. Effective motivation requires integration with organizational culture, distributed leadership, and professional learning systems. This aligns with Fullan's theory of educational change, which emphasizes leadership as a shared and systemic process rather than a single-person attribute [40]. The study's findings extend the theoretical model of Bass and Avolio by suggesting that in the educational sector, emotional intelligence, relational trust, and cultural sensitivity should be considered as complementary dimensions of transformational leadership.

These factors amplify teachers' intrinsic motivation and contribute to sustainable school improvement.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the principal's transformational leadership contributes greatly in increasing the work motivation of teachers in elementary schools. There are 4 dimensions of principal transformational leadership that contribute to increasing teacher work motivation which include: Idealized Influence, Individualized consideration, Intellectual stimulation, and Inspirational motivation. Thus, it can be understood that transformational leadership is a visionary leadership style that is able to increase organizational awareness to members, raise enthusiasm and motivation and can improve and develop the organization in a better direction for now and for the future. The leader of an educational institution should be able to apply a transformational leadership style so that it is expected to be able to contribute to educational change for the better. the better the transformational leadership of the principal, the higher the overall work motivation of teachers.

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