

Transformational Leadership and Teacher Performance: A Case Study of High Schools in Aceh Selatan

Hendri Azhar¹, Ismail^{2*}, Nasir Usman³

Master of Educational Administration Study Program, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh 23111, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Ismail ismail.kutaradja@usk.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance in three high schools in Aceh Selatan, Indonesia, focusing on four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research highlights how these leadership practices enhance teacher engagement, instructional innovation, and morale. Findings reveal that principals who embody transformational qualities foster a positive school culture, leading to improved teacher motivation and collaboration. However, challenges such as limited resources and resistance to change constrain full implementation. This study concludes with recommendations for strengthening transformational leadership in resource-limited contexts and suggests areas for future research, including longitudinal studies and broader stakeholder engagement to examine the long-term effects of transformational practices.

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental pillar for both individual advancement and societal development, with its quality increasingly linked to national economic prosperity and social progress (OECD, 2019). In Indonesia, the National Education System Act (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003) establishes education as crucial for character formation, national identity development, and workforce competitiveness. This legislative framework emphasizes the necessity of continuous improvement in educational quality, particularly through enhanced teaching practices and institutional leadership (Raihani, 2018).

School leadership has emerged as a critical factor in determining educational outcomes and creating an environment conducive to academic excellence (Hallinger et al., 2018). Indonesian school principals, guided by the Ministry of Education and Culture's regulation (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 13 Tahun 2007), must demonstrate proficiency in multiple domains, including managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social competencies. These requirements align with international research highlighting the pivotal role of school leaders in driving institutional success and teacher development (Day & Sammons, 2016).

Transformational leadership, characterized by its emphasis on inspiration, motivation, and collaborative vision-building, has gained significant attention in educational research (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This leadership approach encompasses four essential dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Recent studies indicate that these components collectively enable school leaders to facilitate positive organizational change, address contemporary educational challenges, and enhance staff professional capacity (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

The efficacy of transformational leadership in educational settings is well-documented through empirical research demonstrating its positive impact on teacher motivation, school culture, and student achievement (Sun & Leithwood, 2017). Studies across various cultural contexts reveal that transformational leaders successfully foster professional learning communities, enhance teacher self-efficacy, and promote innovative pedagogical practices (Harris et al., 2019). This leadership style has been particularly effective in creating school environments that support teacher autonomy and professional growth, ultimately leading to improved classroom instruction and student outcomes (Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2018).

However, the implementation of transformational leadership within Indonesian schools, particularly in geographically remote and culturally distinct regions, remains inadequately explored (Raihani & Anderson, 2020). Aceh Selatan presents a unique context where educational institutions face specific challenges, including resource constraints, cultural considerations, and varying levels of teacher professional development (Sulfemi, 2020). These contextual factors may significantly influence the application and effectiveness of

transformational leadership practices, necessitating focused research to understand their dynamics in this specific setting.

This study addresses this knowledge gap by investigating the implementation and impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance in public high schools throughout Aceh Selatan. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research examines how principals interpret and apply transformational leadership principles within their cultural and institutional contexts (Hallinger, 2018). The study specifically focuses on identifying effective leadership practices, understanding implementation challenges, and measuring outcomes associated with transformational leadership approaches.

The research aims to contribute both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for enhancing educational leadership in similar contexts. By examining the intersection of transformational leadership principles with local educational needs and cultural considerations, this study seeks to inform policy development and leadership training programs (Bush & Glover, 2014). The findings will be particularly valuable for educational stakeholders working to strengthen school leadership capacity in diverse cultural settings while maintaining alignment with national educational objectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of transformational leadership, introduced by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985), has become increasingly relevant in the context of educational leadership. Transformational leadership is characterized by its emphasis on motivating and inspiring followers to achieve higher levels of commitment and performance, aligning individual goals with organizational objectives. In education, transformational leadership involves principals who motivate teachers by promoting a shared vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and providing individualized support (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This leadership style has been found to significantly impact school effectiveness, teacher morale, and student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Transformational leadership is often conceptualized through four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence reflects the leader's ability to act as a role model, inspiring trust and respect among teachers (Bass, 1985). Inspirational motivation involves articulating a compelling vision that motivates teachers to align their goals with the school's objectives. Intellectual stimulation encourages teachers to innovate and critically engage with their teaching practices, while individualized consideration addresses the unique needs and aspirations of each teacher (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). These components create an environment where teachers feel valued and empowered, leading to increased commitment and job satisfaction (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015).

Empirical studies support the positive impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance and school effectiveness. A meta-analysis by Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found that transformational leadership in schools positively influences student achievement by fostering an environment conducive to high-quality teaching. Similarly, research conducted by Sun and Leithwood (2012) in Canadian schools demonstrated that transformational

principals positively impact teachers' instructional practices and their engagement in professional development. These findings underscore the importance of transformational leadership in promoting a collaborative and supportive school culture, which is essential for improving teacher performance and student outcomes.

In Indonesia, studies on transformational leadership have shown promising results, although the practice varies across different regions and school contexts. Research by Nurjanah (2018) highlighted that transformational leadership in Indonesian schools is often implemented through mentorship and coaching practices, where principals actively guide teachers toward achieving both personal and professional goals. Furthermore, Marwan (2021) observed that in rural Indonesian schools, transformational leadership helps bridge gaps in resources and support by fostering strong community ties and encouraging teachers to adopt creative, resourceful approaches to instruction. These studies highlight the adaptability of transformational leadership to diverse cultural contexts and the importance of localizing leadership practices to meet specific challenges.

Challenges to implementing transformational leadership in education are also well-documented. Factors such as resistance to change, limited resources, and hierarchical organizational structures can impede the effectiveness of transformational leadership in schools (Hallinger, 2003). Research by Yukl (2013) suggests that for transformational leadership to be successful, leaders must possess not only vision and inspiration but also the ability to manage resources effectively and cultivate buy-in from their team. In Indonesia, similar challenges exist; for example, a study by Hakim (2022) found that in resource-limited rural schools, principals face difficulties in motivating teachers due to inadequate facilities and professional development opportunities. This underscores the need for support systems that enhance the capacity of school leaders to effectively implement transformational leadership.

Several models and frameworks have been proposed to support transformational leadership in educational settings. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) developed a model emphasizing the importance of establishing clear goals, fostering a collaborative environment, and providing continuous professional development for teachers. The distributed leadership model, which suggests delegating leadership responsibilities among teachers, has also been found to complement transformational leadership by fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among staff (Spillane, 2006). These frameworks provide valuable insights into how transformational leadership can be adapted to maximize its effectiveness in various school settings, especially in resource-limited environments.

In general, transformational leadership has been shown to have a profound impact on teacher performance and school effectiveness. Through inspiring a shared vision, fostering innovation, and addressing individual teacher needs, transformational leaders can create a positive and motivating work environment that enhances teacher commitment and student outcomes. However, for transformational leadership to reach its full potential, it must be

adapted to the local context, addressing specific challenges such as limited resources and organizational resistance. This study contributes to the literature by examining how transformational leadership is implemented in public high schools in Aceh Selatan, Indonesia, with the aim of identifying practices, challenges, and outcomes associated with this leadership style in a culturally unique setting.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines the impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance in public high schools in Aceh Selatan, Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences, practices, and perceptions of school principals and teachers regarding transformational leadership. The methodology section outlines the research design, sampling approach, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures, as summarized in the tables below.

Research Design

The study employs a qualitative, descriptive case study design. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of transformational leadership as experienced and implemented by school principals and teachers within their specific educational and cultural contexts.

Table 1. Research Design

Research Type	Qualitative, Descriptive Case Study
Purpose	To explore and understand the application of transformational leadership in public high schools
Focus	Experiences and practices of school principals and teachers
Context	Public high schools in Aceh Selatan, Indonesia

Sampling

The study uses purposive sampling to select participants who are directly involved in leadership and teaching roles in the selected schools. Three public high schools were chosen as case sites, with a focus on obtaining a diverse perspective from each school. The sampling included principals, vice principals, and teachers, providing a holistic view of transformational leadership from various roles.

Table 2. Sampling Approach

Sampling Method	Purposive Sampling
Sample Size	Three schools: Principal, Vice Principal, and 2-3 teachers per school
Selection Criteria	Schools with a demonstrated emphasis on transformational leadership practices

Participant Roles	School Principal, Vice Principal, Teachers
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Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using multiple techniques to enhance the reliability and depth of the findings. The primary methods included semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. This triangulation of data sources allowed the researcher to cross-verify findings and gain a comprehensive understanding of transformational leadership practices.

Table 3. Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Method	Description
Interviews	Semi-structured interviews with principals, vice principals, and teachers to explore experiences with transformational leadership
Observations	In-situ observations of school leadership practices, focusing on interactions between principals and teachers
Document Analysis	Analysis of school documents, including policy manuals, professional development plans, and meeting records related to leadership and teacher performance

Interview Protocol

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to allow for flexibility while ensuring that key aspects of transformational leadership were addressed. The interviews covered the dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Table 4. Sample Interview Questions

Transformational Leadership Dimension	Sample Questions
Idealized Influence	"How do you perceive your role as a model for teachers in promoting school goals?"
Inspirational Motivation	"How do you inspire and motivate your teachers to achieve educational objectives?"
Intellectual Stimulation	"In what ways do you encourage teachers to innovate in their teaching practices?"
Individualized Consideration	"How do you address the individual needs and aspirations of your teachers?"

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion

drawing/verification. Thematic coding was used to identify patterns and themes in the interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. Triangulation was conducted to ensure data accuracy and validity by comparing data from different sources.

Table 5. Data Analysis Procedure

Stage	Description
Data Reduction	Condensing raw data by selecting relevant information and discarding extraneous data
Data Display	Organizing data into matrices and tables to facilitate pattern recognition
Conclusion Drawing	Developing themes and interpreting findings to address research questions
Verification	Triangulating data from interviews, observations, and documents to ensure validity

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, several strategies were employed, including data triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Member checking involved sharing summaries of findings with participants to confirm accuracy, while peer debriefing provided an additional layer of review by discussing findings with colleagues.

Table 6. Validity and Reliability Strategies

Strategy	Description
Data Triangulation	Cross-verification of data from interviews, observations, and document analysis
Member Checking	Participants reviewed summaries of findings to confirm interpretations
Peer Debriefing	Colleagues reviewed and discussed findings to ensure credibility and reduce researcher bias

This methodology provides a structured approach for examining transformational leadership within the unique context of Aceh Selatan’s public high schools. The use of multiple data sources and rigorous analysis methods strengthens the reliability of the findings and supports a nuanced understanding of how transformational leadership practices can impact teacher performance.

RESEARCH RESULT

This section presents the key findings from the study on transformational leadership's influence on teacher performance in high schools in Aceh Selatan. The results are organized around the four dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—and highlight the effects on teacher motivation, instructional practices, and collaboration. Additionally,

challenges encountered in implementing transformational leadership are summarized.

Observed Transformational Leadership Practices

Principals demonstrated various transformational leadership practices that positively influenced the school environment. These practices, categorized by the four dimensions of transformational leadership, are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Transformational Leadership Practices by Dimension

Dimension	Observed Practices
Idealized Influence	Principals acted as ethical role models, involved teachers in goal-setting, and emphasized school values.
Inspirational Motivation	Principals set a compelling school vision, celebrated achievements, and communicated high yet attainable goals.
Intellectual Stimulation	Principals encouraged innovation, promoted professional development, and supported problem-solving skills.
Individualized Consideration	Principals provided mentorship, acknowledged individual achievements, and offered tailored feedback.

These leadership practices varied slightly among schools but consistently contributed to fostering a positive school culture and improving teacher engagement.

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance

The transformational leadership practices observed led to improvements in teacher motivation, instructional methods, and collaboration. Teachers expressed increased commitment to school goals and described enhancements in their instructional practices and teamwork. Table 8 summarizes these impacts.

Table 8. Impact of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance

Performance Indicator	Observed Changes
Motivation	Higher teacher commitment to school objectives and increased job satisfaction.
Instructional Practices	Adoption of innovative teaching strategies and improved lesson planning.
Collaboration	Stronger teamwork and more frequent sharing of best practices and resources among teachers.

Idealized Influence and Teacher Engagement

Principals exhibiting strong idealized influence fostered higher levels of teacher engagement. Teachers in these schools showed increased dedication to

school activities and alignment with school values. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between idealized influence and teacher engagement levels across the schools.

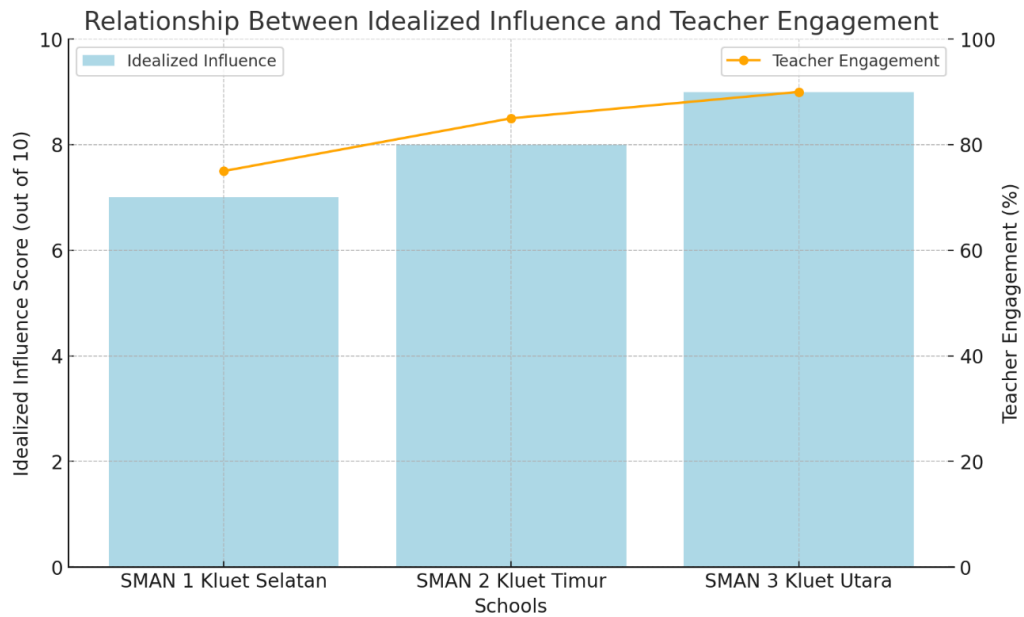


Figure 1. Relationship Between Idealized Influence and Teacher Engagement

Inspirational Motivation and Teacher Morale

Inspirational motivation, particularly through vision-setting and celebrating achievements, was linked to increased teacher morale. Schools where principals frequently recognized teacher successes saw higher levels of enthusiasm and job satisfaction. Table 3 presents these findings.

Table 9. Inspirational Motivation and Teacher Morale

Motivational Practice	Impact on Teacher Morale
Setting a shared vision	Teachers felt aligned with school goals and expressed a strong sense of purpose.
Celebrating achievements	Increased teacher confidence and enthusiasm in teaching activities.
Communicating challenging goals	Teachers were motivated to reach higher standards, feeling valued and supported.

Intellectual Stimulation and Innovation in Teaching

Intellectual stimulation encouraged teachers to engage in innovative practices and critical thinking. Figure 2 illustrates the correlation between intellectual stimulation and the number of new teaching strategies introduced by teachers.

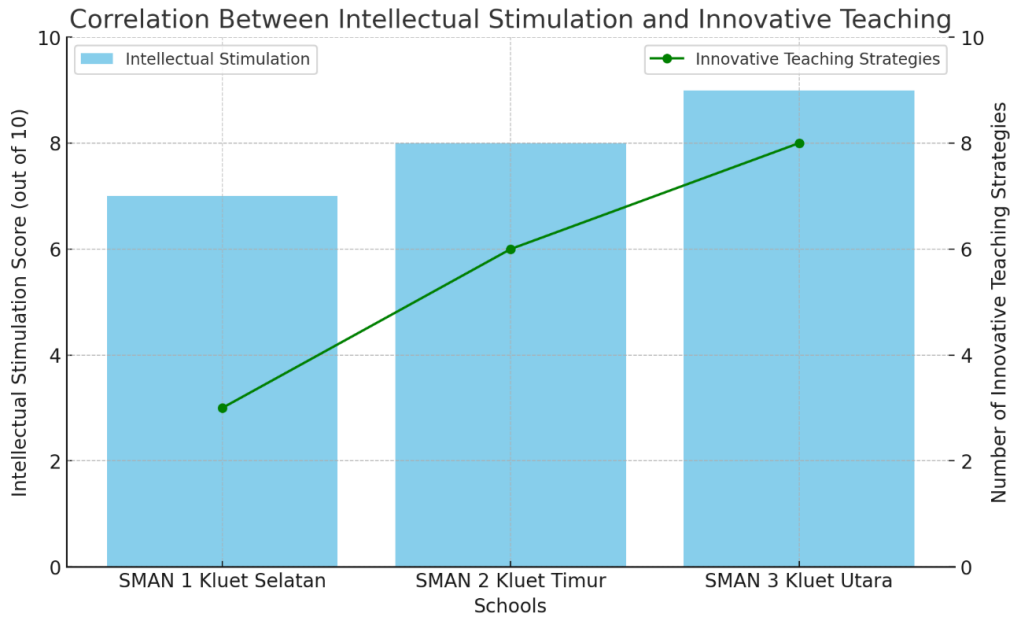


Figure 2. Correlation Between Intellectual Stimulation and Innovation in Teaching

Individualized Consideration and Teacher Development

Individualized consideration practices were reflected in the personalized support provided to teachers, which enhanced their professional development. Table 4 outlines the specific individualized support methods and their impact on teacher development.

Table 10. Individualized Consideration and Teacher Development

Support Practice	Impact on Teacher Development
Mentoring and coaching sessions	Improved instructional skills and increased teacher confidence.
Personalized feedback	Teachers felt valued and were motivated to improve their practices.
Professional development resources	Enhanced competencies in subject areas and classroom management.

Challenges in Implementing Transformational Leadership

While transformational leadership practices led to positive outcomes, several challenges emerged, including limited resources, resistance to change, and time constraints. These factors occasionally limited principals' ability to fully implement transformational practices. Figure 3 shows the primary challenges identified in implementing transformational leadership.

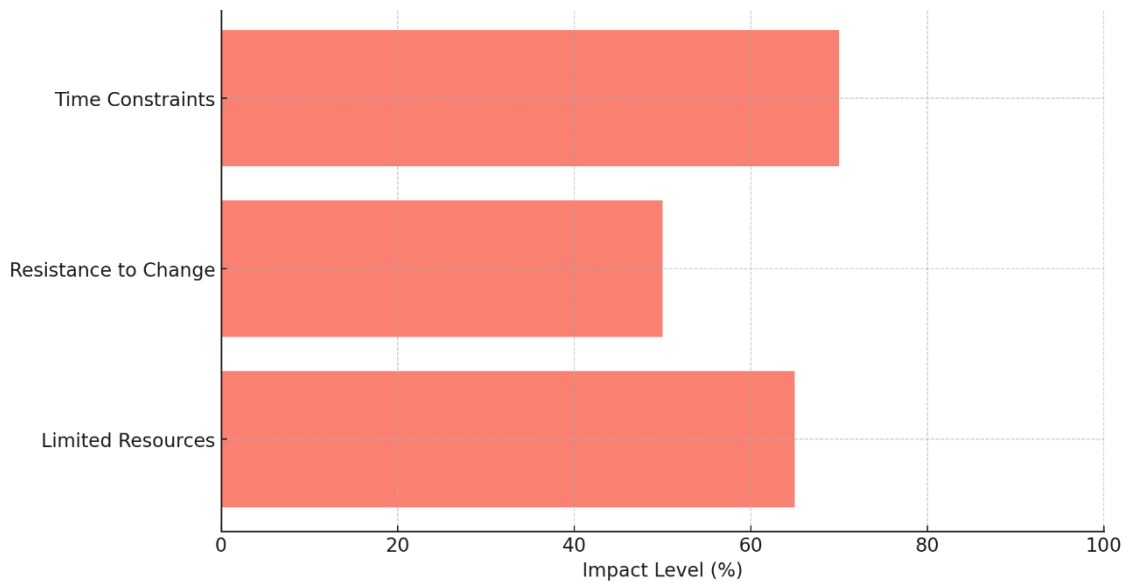


Figure 3. Challenges in Implementing Transformational Leadership

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study indicate that transformational leadership practices positively impact teacher engagement, instructional innovation, and overall school climate in the high schools studied in Aceh Selatan. These results align with existing research on transformational leadership, which emphasizes the role of school leaders in inspiring, motivating, and supporting teachers to improve both professional performance and student outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2006). This discussion explores the implications of each leadership dimension, examines challenges faced in the implementation of transformational leadership, and suggests areas for future research and practical applications.

Idealized Influence and Teacher Engagement

Principals who displayed high levels of idealized influence, acting as role models and embodying school values, fostered significantly higher levels of teacher engagement. Teachers in these schools demonstrated a strong commitment to school objectives, aligning with previous studies that emphasize the importance of role modeling in transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). When principals exhibit ethical behavior, integrity, and a commitment to school values, they create a foundation of trust, encouraging teachers to invest personally in their roles (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015). This trust and alignment with school goals were observed in the current study, with teachers participating more actively in school activities and showing increased dedication to student success.

The finding that idealized influence positively correlates with teacher engagement also reflects transformational leadership's emphasis on fostering a shared vision and values (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Schools where principals involved teachers in setting goals showed notably higher engagement, supporting Leithwood and Jantzi's (2000) assertion that shared leadership fosters a sense of purpose and belonging among staff. Given these outcomes, schools

should consider implementing structured goal-setting sessions that involve both teachers and administrators to further promote a shared commitment to school objectives.

Inspirational Motivation and Teacher Morale

Inspirational motivation, as demonstrated by principals through the articulation of a clear vision and celebration of teacher achievements, was linked to higher teacher morale in the study. This finding aligns with the work of Burns (1978) and Yukl (2013), who suggest that inspirational leaders motivate followers by instilling a sense of purpose and achievement. In schools where principals regularly celebrated milestones and highlighted individual and team accomplishments, teachers reported feeling more enthusiastic and fulfilled in their work, which aligns with the notion that transformational leaders foster intrinsic motivation among their staff (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Celebrating achievements and communicating a compelling vision appear to address teachers' psychological needs for recognition and accomplishment, as posited by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). By recognizing teachers' contributions, principals strengthen the school's culture and reinforce a supportive environment conducive to professional growth (Sun & Leithwood, 2012). To maintain this positive influence on morale, school leaders may consider implementing regular opportunities to recognize and celebrate achievements, such as monthly staff meetings or newsletters that highlight accomplishments.

Intellectual Stimulation and Innovation in Teaching

Intellectual stimulation was found to encourage innovative teaching practices, with principals supporting professional development and promoting problem-solving. This aligns with the transformational leadership framework, which emphasizes the importance of intellectual stimulation in fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). Studies by Robinson et al. (2008) and Allen et al. (2015) corroborate that leaders who encourage intellectual curiosity and critical thinking among staff create an environment where innovation can thrive.

In the schools studied, teachers introduced new teaching strategies and adopted creative approaches to problem-solving, which were reportedly encouraged by the principals' support for experimentation and growth. This support for innovation is particularly relevant in contexts like Aceh Selatan, where teachers may face unique challenges and resource constraints that demand adaptive approaches (Hakim, 2022). Encouraging intellectual stimulation may therefore serve as a vital strategy for educational leaders, particularly in resource-limited areas, where flexible thinking and problem-solving can greatly enhance educational outcomes.

Individualized Consideration and Teacher Development

The provision of individualized support, including mentorship and personalized feedback, positively impacted teacher development and satisfaction in the schools studied. This outcome reflects prior research showing that transformational leaders who attend to individual needs foster a supportive

work environment that enhances employee motivation and growth (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Yukl, 2013). Teachers in the current study reported feeling valued and supported, especially when principals offered tailored guidance and acknowledged their unique contributions, supporting the individualized consideration component of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In alignment with findings from Avolio and Yammarino (2013), individualized consideration not only builds stronger relationships between leaders and followers but also encourages professional growth by addressing each teacher's specific developmental needs. To further support teacher development, schools might implement structured mentorship programs or provide opportunities for personalized feedback that aligns with teachers' professional goals.

Challenges in Implementing Transformational Leadership

Despite the positive impacts observed, challenges such as limited resources, resistance to change, and time constraints were significant barriers to fully implementing transformational leadership in the study's schools. These challenges are consistent with findings from Hallinger (2003) and Yukl (2013), who suggest that resource limitations can constrain leadership practices, especially in developing regions. In rural areas like Aceh Selatan, limited access to training materials, technology, and funding restricts the ability of principals to provide continuous professional development, thereby hindering the effectiveness of transformational practices (Hakim, 2022).

To address these challenges, policymakers could prioritize investments in school infrastructure, allocate funding for professional development, and encourage partnerships with external organizations that provide educational resources. Additionally, creating a support network among principals could help share best practices and facilitate a collaborative approach to overcoming common barriers in resource-constrained schools.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

The results of this study underscore the effectiveness of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher engagement, morale, and instructional innovation. By adopting transformational practices, school leaders can foster an inclusive and dynamic school culture that supports teachers' professional growth and ultimately improves student outcomes. Future research should explore the long-term effects of transformational leadership on student achievement and examine how specific contextual factors, such as community involvement and cultural expectations, may impact the efficacy of these practices in different regions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance in high schools in Aceh Selatan, focusing on the four key dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership practices positively

influence teacher engagement, instructional practices, and morale. Principals who act as role models, communicate a clear and compelling vision, support innovative teaching, and provide personalized mentorship create a school environment that fosters collaboration and commitment.

The study found that idealized influence is critical in enhancing teacher engagement. Principals who model ethical behavior and involve teachers in the goal-setting process help foster a stronger connection to the school's objectives and values. Teachers respond positively to leaders who demonstrate integrity and commitment to shared values, aligning their efforts with the school's overarching goals. Furthermore, inspirational motivation plays a crucial role in boosting teacher morale. When principals set a clear vision and celebrate teacher achievements, it instills a greater sense of purpose among teachers. Such acknowledgment reinforces teachers' self-worth and encourages them to strive for excellence in their instructional practices.

Intellectual stimulation emerged as a key factor in promoting instructional innovation. By encouraging critical thinking and creativity, principals support teachers in exploring new instructional strategies and adapting to changing educational needs. This focus on intellectual stimulation is particularly beneficial in resource-limited environments, where adaptive teaching strategies are often necessary. Lastly, individualized consideration was found to have a positive impact on teacher development and job satisfaction. Principals who offer mentorship and provide feedback tailored to each teacher's unique strengths and goals help create a supportive environment that motivates teachers to reach their full potential. These dimensions collectively contribute to a positive school culture that not only enhances teacher performance but also lays the groundwork for continuous professional development.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study identified several challenges in implementing transformational leadership, particularly in the resource-limited context of Aceh Selatan. Limited resources, resistance to change, and time constraints emerged as significant barriers, hindering principals' ability to fully adopt and sustain transformational leadership practices. Addressing these limitations will be essential for maximizing the potential benefits of transformational leadership in schools with similar contextual challenges.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, this study offers several recommendations to strengthen transformational leadership practices in high schools, particularly in contexts with limited resources. One crucial approach is to foster a collaborative environment where teachers are actively involved in setting school objectives. When teachers participate in shaping the school's strategic direction, they are more likely to feel aligned with its mission and committed to its success. Regular planning sessions or workshops can provide structured opportunities for teachers and principals to engage in collaborative goal-setting, reinforcing a shared sense of purpose.

Another recommendation is to implement recognition programs that help sustain high morale by acknowledging teachers' efforts. Formal recognition, whether through awards, public acknowledgment during staff meetings, or

written appreciation, can significantly boost teacher motivation. By valuing teacher contributions, these programs help foster a positive, supportive work culture that encourages teachers to maintain high performance.

To further enhance intellectual stimulation, schools could invest in professional development initiatives that focus on innovative teaching strategies. Even in resource-limited settings, online courses, local workshops, and peer-led sessions can provide valuable professional growth opportunities. Such initiatives encourage teachers to adopt new instructional methods and adapt creatively to challenges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. For individualized consideration, schools might implement mentorship programs that pair experienced teachers with newer staff. This mentorship framework allows teachers to receive ongoing guidance and feedback tailored to their professional goals, creating a structured system of support that can strengthen teacher development.

In addition to school-level recommendations, this study underscores the importance of policy support and resource allocation at the institutional level. Education policymakers and local governments should be informed of the resource challenges that constrain leadership practices, particularly in rural or under-resourced schools. Increased funding for professional development, educational resources, and infrastructure can empower principals to implement transformational practices more effectively. Furthermore, developing leadership training programs focused on transformational leadership can equip principals with essential skills to inspire, motivate, and support teachers even in challenging contexts.

Creating a support network among principals could also help address common challenges and facilitate the sharing of best practices. Regular meetings or an online platform where school leaders can discuss shared issues, brainstorm solutions, and provide mutual encouragement could reinforce principals' capacity to lead transformationally, even with limited resources. This study contributes to the broader understanding of transformational leadership in education, particularly in resource-constrained environments, and highlights the importance of tailored strategies that address specific contextual challenges.

Directions for Future Research

Future research could build upon these findings by exploring the long-term effects of transformational leadership on student achievement, which remains an area of ongoing inquiry. Examining the role of community involvement in enhancing school leadership practices could also offer valuable insights, particularly in rural and culturally diverse settings. Additionally, comparative studies that investigate the implementation of transformational leadership across different cultural or regional contexts could provide a deeper understanding of how these practices can be adapted to various educational environments. By addressing these areas, future research could further contribute to the development of effective leadership models that support educational improvements in diverse contexts.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance in high schools in Aceh Selatan, several limitations suggest avenues for future research. First, the study's qualitative approach, while rich in descriptive detail, limits the generalizability of findings to other contexts. The insights gathered from a small sample of schools may not fully represent the diverse educational environments across Indonesia or other regions with different cultural, socio-economic, and structural factors. Future research could employ a mixed-methods approach that includes quantitative measures, enabling a broader analysis of transformational leadership practices across various school types and regions. This approach would allow researchers to examine statistical correlations between leadership dimensions and specific teacher performance metrics, strengthening the generalizability of findings.

Another limitation is the focus on short-term observations and immediate teacher responses, which may not capture the long-term impact of transformational leadership practices on both teacher development and student outcomes. Transformational leadership often involves gradual changes that may take time to influence classroom practices, student engagement, and academic achievement. Longitudinal studies could address this limitation by examining how sustained transformational leadership affects teacher performance, retention, and student success over time. Such studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the enduring effects of transformational leadership in educational settings.

This study also primarily considers the principal's perspective, with less emphasis on how transformational leadership interacts with other stakeholders, such as students, parents, and community members. Transformational leadership is most effective when it includes a wide array of school stakeholders who contribute to a cohesive educational environment. Further research could investigate how transformational leadership practices engage community members and parents, exploring the role of broader community involvement in supporting school leadership. This focus would enhance our understanding of how transformational leadership can foster inclusive school cultures that extend beyond the teacher-principal relationship.

Finally, the study highlights challenges related to limited resources, resistance to change, and time constraints that impact transformational leadership's effectiveness. However, it does not delve deeply into specific strategies for overcoming these barriers in resource-limited contexts. Future research could investigate targeted interventions designed to mitigate these challenges, such as technology-based professional development, collaborative networks among rural schools, or partnerships with local organizations. Exploring these targeted interventions would provide actionable insights for educational leaders seeking to implement transformational leadership effectively, even in under-resourced settings.

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