

The Influence Of Transformational Leadership On Teacher Performance Through The Motivation Of Elementary School Teachers In Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara

Original Article

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership on work motivation and teacher performance, as well as examine the role of motivation as a mediating variable in elementary school teachers in Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. The background of this research departs from the importance of the role of the principal as a leader who is able to create a positive work climate, raise enthusiasm, and inspire teachers to work with high motivation so that their performance increases. The research population includes all elementary school teachers in Alok District as many as 225 people, with a sample of 144 respondents selected using purposive sampling techniques based on the criteria of a minimum working period of three years. Data was collected through questionnaire deployment and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach with the help of SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' work motivation. In addition, work motivation has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. Other findings show that work motivation plays a role as a mediating variable between transformational leadership and teacher performance. This confirms that school principals with a transformational leadership style can increase work motivation, which has a direct impact on improving teacher performance in elementary schools.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Motivation, Teacher Performance.

1. Introduction

Education is the main pillar in forming a superior, competitive, and characterful generation, where teachers play an important role as agents of change that directly affect the learning process and the achievement of national education goals. According to (Sartika, 2021), teacher performance reflects the effectiveness of educational institutions in achieving the goals that have been set. Meanwhile, (Sulistiyorini, 2021) emphasized that teacher performance is a measure of success in carrying out tasks, responsibilities, and achieving targets based on applicable standards. Thus, improving teacher performance is a top priority in efforts to improve the quality of national education. However, the conditions in Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, show that there are various problems that have an impact on the decline in the quality of learning. The observation results show that there are still many teachers who lack discipline, arrive late, leave classes early, and are less motivated in carrying out their duties. This condition has an impact on reduced student learning hours and low quality of educational outcomes. Based on data from the local Education Office, only about 40% of teachers achieve adequate performance criteria in the annual evaluation, with



the main causes being low creativity, lack of professional training, and weak ability to use learning technology.

One of the important factors that is suspected to affect this condition is the leadership style of the school principal. Transformational leadership is a major concern because it is considered to be able to inspire, motivate, and empower teachers to work beyond expectations. According to (Mulyasa, 2023), transformational leadership includes four important dimensions, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The principal with this leadership style not only rules, but also inspires and enables his subordinates to develop professionally. However, the reality on the ground shows that not all school principals in Alok District have implemented transformational leadership styles optimally. Some school principals still focus on administrative tasks and formal supervision compared to coaching and empowering teachers. In fact, according to Permendiknas Number 13 of 2007, school principals have responsibilities in coaching, mentoring, empowerment, and supervision of the entire educational process in schools. This mismatch between theory and practice creates a gap between the ideal role of the principal and the real conditions faced by teachers in the field.

In addition to leadership, teachers' work motivation is also an important factor in determining the quality of their performance. According to (Tantawi et al., 2020), motivation is an internal energy that drives a person to act to achieve certain goals. Teachers with high motivation will be more enthusiastic in teaching, creative in developing learning strategies, and consistent in improving their competence. In contrast, teachers with low motivation tend to work modestly and lack initiative. Therefore, school principals have an important role in fostering teachers' work motivation through an inspiring and participatory leadership approach. Previous research has shown mixed results regarding the relationship between transformational leadership, work motivation, and teacher performance. Research by (Wahyuni et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2023) found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. However, different results were shown by (Jumiati et al., 2022; Miharja et al., 2023) who found the effect to be insignificant. These differences in results show that there is a research gap that opens up opportunities for further research by considering work motivation as a mediating variable, especially in the context of elementary schools in non-urban areas such as Alok District. Based on this description, this study is important to analyze the influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance with work motivation as a mediating variable. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of education management and leadership science, as well as practical benefits for school principals and policy makers in formulating strategies to increase teacher motivation and performance. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be the basis for efforts to strengthen the capacity of school principals in implementing an effective transformational leadership style to create a positive work culture in the elementary school environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that is oriented towards change and development of individuals and organizations as a whole. Transformational leaders not only play the role of directors, but also as inspirers and agents of change who are able to motivate, empower, and foster the spirit of collective work in achieving a common vision (Sutikno, 2019; Rivai, 2019). This leadership style emphasizes the importance of a strong vision, empathy for subordinates, and the ability to build positive emotional relationships so as to be able to improve the performance and commitment of organizational members (Pardeno, 2021;

Sedarmayanti, 2018). In the context of education, school principals with transformational leadership have been proven to be able to create a collaborative and innovative work environment, as well as encourage teachers to behave proactively and are oriented towards improving the quality of learning (Fitriani et al., 2021; Riani et al., 2023).

According to Burns (in Yukl, 2010; Bass & Riggio, 2006), transformational leadership differs from transactional leadership in that it emphasizes more on values, morals, and motivation than simply the exchange of rewards. Transformational leaders focus on developing subordinates' potential, fostering confidence, and inspiring them to exceed expectations in achieving organizational goals. Bass and Avolio (Rahmah, 2024) explained that the indicators of transformational leadership include a clear strategy, concern for members, positive stimulation, maintaining team cohesion, and respecting differences of opinion. Thus, transformational leadership becomes an important foundation in creating an organization that is adaptive, innovative, and oriented to sustainable growth.

2.2. Teacher Performance

Teacher performance is the result of work and professional behavior that is shown in the implementation of the task of teaching, educating, guiding, and evaluating students in accordance with the standards that have been set. (Wibowo, 2012) stated that performance is not only related to the final result, but also includes the process and way a person works. This is in line with the opinion of (Kaswan, 2019; Sahabuddin et al., 2024), who states that performance reflects the application of skills, abilities, and knowledge to achieve organizational goals. In the context of education, teacher performance describes the extent to which teachers carry out their professional responsibilities in creating effective, innovative, and oriented learning to improve student learning outcomes (Darmadi, 2018; Barnawi & Arifin, 2019).

Aspects that assess teacher performance include the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning (Directorate General of PMPTK, 2019; Nanang & Sukanto, 2020). In addition, other important indicators include work quality, punctuality, communication skills, and the application of objective learning assessments (Sukmadinata et al., 2006). Teachers who perform well can manage the classroom effectively, create a conducive learning environment, and establish productive communication with students and colleagues. Thus, teachers' performance is a reflection of their professionalism and dedication in sustainably improving the quality of education.

2.3. Motivation

Motivation is a psychological impulse that moves a person to act in achieving a certain goal. In the world of work, motivation is a key factor that determines an individual's enthusiasm, productivity, and perseverance in carrying out their duties. According to (Andriani et al., 2018), work motivation is a driving force that makes a person willing and enthusiastic to carry out activities to achieve the expected results. (Sofyan et al., 2020) added that motivation also functions as mental energy that maintains consistency and morale despite facing challenges. Factors that affect work motivation include individual characteristics, such as personal interests, needs, and values, as well as employment factors such as salary, working relationships, organizational environment, and leadership style (Ermawati & Ardana, 2018).

In the context of education, teachers' work motivation is a fundamental element that determines the success of the learning process. (Saputra et al., 2019) distinguish motivation into two main categories, namely internal and external motivation. Internal motivation arises from within the individual, such as the desire to achieve and personal satisfaction, while external motivation comes from the outside, such as rewards, social support, and work incentives. Luthans in (Novita, 2016) emphasized that motivational indicators include

responsibility, achievement, self-development, and independence. The combination of internal and external motivation will create a strong and sustainable work drive, so that teachers can provide the best performance and contribute optimally to the achievement of educational goals.

2.4. Work Loyalty

Job Loyalty is a form of employee loyalty at work. Loyalty is a form of employee devotion to the company. By having an attitude of loyalty, employees take part in providing the best for the company. Employees are responsible for the work given because of their love and sense of belonging to their work. A person who has loyalty will have the will to cooperate well. Based on the opinions of the experts above, it can be concluded that work loyalty is the attitude and commitment of employees to actively contribute to achieving organizational goals. Work loyalty is reflected in devotion, responsibility, discipline, honesty, and the willingness to work for a long period of time. This loyalty also reflects a love and belonging to work, which encourages employees to give their best for the company. Work loyalty also has a positive impact on good cooperation between employees, because they have a willingness to work together in achieving common goals. By having an attitude of loyalty, employees are responsible for the work assigned and are committed to achieving the success of the organization. In the context of work-life balance, work loyalty can affect the balance between work and personal life. Loyal employees tend to have a strong attachment to their work, so they may be inclined to sacrifice personal time and energy to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, it is important for employees to achieve a healthy balance between dedication to their work and their personal needs.

2.5. Employee Performance

The success of a company is certainly influenced by the performance of qualified employees. Employee performance is also an aspect that helps the company in achieving its goals. Therefore, every company always wants to continue to be able to improve the performance of its employees. Performance is "the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him" (Mangkunegara, 2019:67). Employee performance is the result of a job well done and achieving goals. It is produced when an individual can carry out the tasks given based on skill, experience, seriousness, and time (Hasibuan, 2020:154). Kasmir also stated that performance is the result of work and work behavior achieved by employees in completing tasks and responsibilities given within a certain period of time (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Kasmir, 2019). Employee performance itself is the result of work done well and achieving goals. This can be achieved when an individual can carry out the tasks given based on their skills, experience, seriousness, and time. In addition, performance can also be measured through work results and work behavior achieved by employees in completing tasks and responsibilities given within a certain period of time. Thus, companies always strive to improve the performance of their employees in order to better achieve the company's goals. This can be done through skill development and employee competency improvement, providing appropriate motivation and rewards, and creating a conducive work environment for employees to develop.

2.6. Relationships Between Variables

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Motivation Transformational leadership has an important role in shaping and increasing teachers' work motivation. Principals who apply a transformational leadership style are able to provide inspiration, individual attention, and intellectual stimulation to teachers, so that they are encouraged to work more passionately and innovate in teaching. Transformational leaders not only function as managers, but also as role models and agents of change that foster a sense of belonging and commitment to the school's goals. This is in line with the findings of (Nurfasicha et al., 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2024) who show that an inspiring and participatory leadership style can increase teachers' intrinsic motivation through the creation of a positive work climate, trust, and moral support from school principals.

The Influence of Motivation on Teacher Performance Work motivation has been proven to have a significant effect on teacher performance, because motivated teachers tend to show high discipline, great responsibility, and enthusiasm to provide the best results in the learning process. Motivation encourages teachers to continue learning, develop creativity, and innovate in teaching activities, which ultimately improves the quality of student learning outcomes. Motivational motivation can come from intrinsic factors such as personal achievement and recognition of performance, as well as extrinsic factors such as the principal's support, awards, and a comfortable work environment. Research by Angelya et al., 2024; Wijayanto et al., 2021) shows that teachers with high motivation have more consistent, productive, and professional work performance than teachers with low motivation levels.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance through Motivation Transformational leadership also has an indirect influence on teacher performance through work motivation as a mediating variable. Principals with a transformational leadership style are able to foster teachers' intrinsic motivation by providing a clear vision, moral encouragement, and recognition of their contributions. This creates a work environment that supports improved performance. According to (Bass and Riggio, 2006), transformational leaders inspire their subordinates to transcend personal interests for the sake of the organization, through ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention. Thus, when the principal succeeds in fostering work motivation through a transformational approach, teachers will be more enthusiastic, focused, and perform highly in carrying out their professional duties. Research by (Wahyuni et al., 2024; Angelya et al., 2024) supports this relationship, where transformational leadership has been shown to improve teacher performance directly or through increased work motivation.

2.7. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The concept of the hypothesis according to (Hair et al., 2016: 66), is to communicate relationships and variables more effectively in the form of a visual display of the hypothetical relationship using box and arrow diagrams, in addition to the conceptual model helps researchers efficiently to share and discuss their thoughts on possible causal relationships, based on previous theories and research, so research hypotheses such as skeletal drawings are formulated hypotheses below.

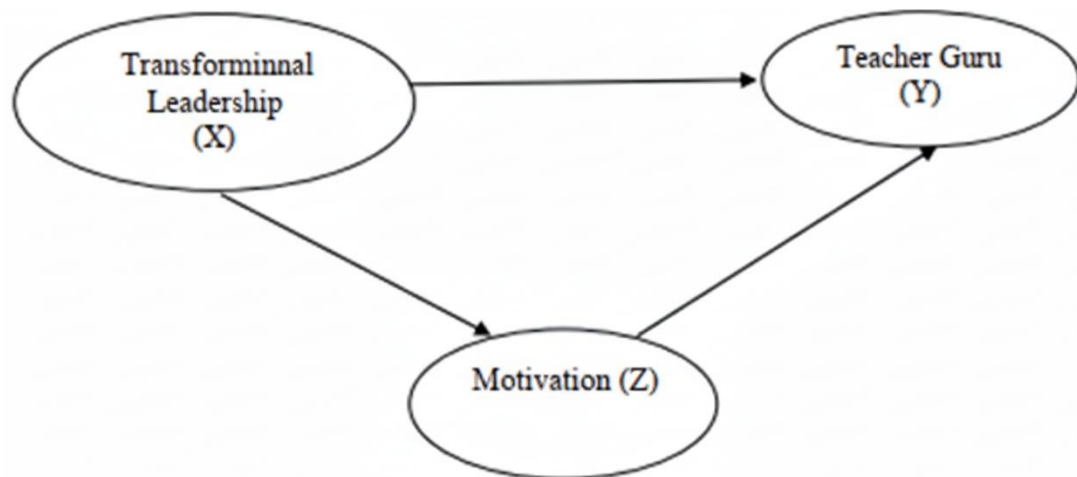


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The hypothesis in this study is:

H1: It is suspected that Transforminnal Leadership (X) has a positive and significant effect on Teacher Motivation (Z) in Elementary Schools in Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara.

H2: It is suspected that Teacher Motivation (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Teacher Performance (Y) in Elementary Schools in Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara.

H3: It is suspected that Transforminnal Leadership (X) has a positive and significant effect on Teacher Performance (Y) through Teacher Motivation (Z) as a mediating variable in elementary schools in Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara.

3. Methods

This research was carried out in an elementary school in Alok District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, which was chosen because of the affordability of access, relevance of the topic, and the diversity of school characteristics. The type of research used is explanatory research with a quantitative approach, aiming to explain the causal relationship between variables, namely, transforminnal leadership, motivation, and teacher performance. According to (Sugiyono, 2022:37), explanatory quantitative research serves to test hypotheses that have been formulated based on existing theories.

The population in this study is all elementary school teachers in Alok District as many as 225 people, while the number of samples was determined using the Slovin formula with an error rate of 5%, so that 144 respondents were obtained. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling with the criteria of teachers who have worked for at least three years, so that the data obtained reflects experience and relevance to the research variables (Sugiyono, 2021).

The data of this study consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected through questionnaires and direct interviews with teachers, while secondary data was obtained from books, journals, and supporting documents (Ghozali, 2016). Variable measurements used a five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) to assess respondents' level of perception of each statement (Siregar, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The data analysis technique uses Partial Least Square (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 4.0 software, as it is suitable for causal relationship models with relatively small sample numbers and data that are not normally distributed (Ghozali, 2015; Sholihin & Ratmono, 2020). Model evaluation is carried out through two stages, namely the outer model (validity

and reliability of the construct) and the inner model (relationship between variables). The hypothesis test was carried out by looking at the t-statistical value ≥ 1.96 or p-value < 0.05 , which showed a significant influence between variables in the research model.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Overview of Research Objects

Alok District in Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, is a strategic government, economic, and educational center, covering part of Maumere City. In the primary education sector, there are around 225 teachers from 17 public and private elementary schools, most of whom have met the S1 qualifications and implemented the Independent Curriculum. However, challenges such as limited facilities, administrative burden, and professional development support are still faced. School principals play an important role in motivating teachers through a transformational leadership style that is able to increase teachers' enthusiasm, performance, and commitment to the quality of learning. With heterogeneous social conditions and varied educational facilities, research on the influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance through work motivation has become relevant to support policies to improve the quality of education in Sikka Regency.

4.2. Description of Research Results

Descriptive statistical analysis was carried out to describe the characteristics of 144 respondents, consisting of elementary school teachers in Alok District, Sikka Regency. The results showed that the majority of respondents were female as many as 88 people (61.11%), while 56 men (38.89%). In terms of education, most of them have received undergraduate education (S1) as many as 132 people (91.67%) and only 12 people (8.33%) have postgraduate education (S2). Based on age, the most respondents were in the productive age range of 31–40 years (41.67%), followed by 41–50 years old (29.17%), over 50 years old (18.05%), and 21–30 years old (11.11%). In general, the profile of teachers in Alok District shows the dominance of female teachers who have met the minimum educational qualifications and are at productive age. This condition has great potential for improving the quality of basic education, especially if it is supported by the implementation of transformational leadership of school principals and increasing teachers' work motivation in carrying out their professional duties and responsibilities.

In addition, the descriptive analysis of the research variables aims to provide an overview of the respondents' responses to each of the variables studied, namely Transformational Leadership (X), Teacher Motivation (Z), and Teacher Performance (Y). Each variable was measured using an instrument in the form of statements with a Likert scale of 1–5, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The results of the analysis showed that in general, all variables were in the high category, which indicated that respondents had a positive perception of the principal's leadership, work motivation, and teacher performance. The highest average score was found in the Transformational Leadership variable (X) with a mean value of 4.32, indicating that the principal was considered to have played a role as a leader who was able to inspire, provide individual attention, and encourage positive change. The Motivation Variable (Z) has an average of 4.18, indicating that teachers have a strong drive to excel and contribute to improving the quality of education. Meanwhile, Teacher Performance (Y) obtained an average of 4.25, indicating that teachers have a good level of responsibility, discipline, and professionalism in carrying out their duties (table 1).

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Yes	Variable	Mean	Category
1	Transformational Leadership (X)	4,32	Tall
2	Teacher Motivation (Z)	4,18	Tall
3	Teacher Performance (Y)	4,25	Tall

4.3. Data Analysis

a) Model PLS

The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS) to see the relationship between variables in the research model, namely Transformational Leadership (X), Motivation (Z), and Teacher Performance (Y). The model image shows the factor loading value of each indicator and the path coefficient between variables, which is the basis for the validity and reliability test (Figure 2).

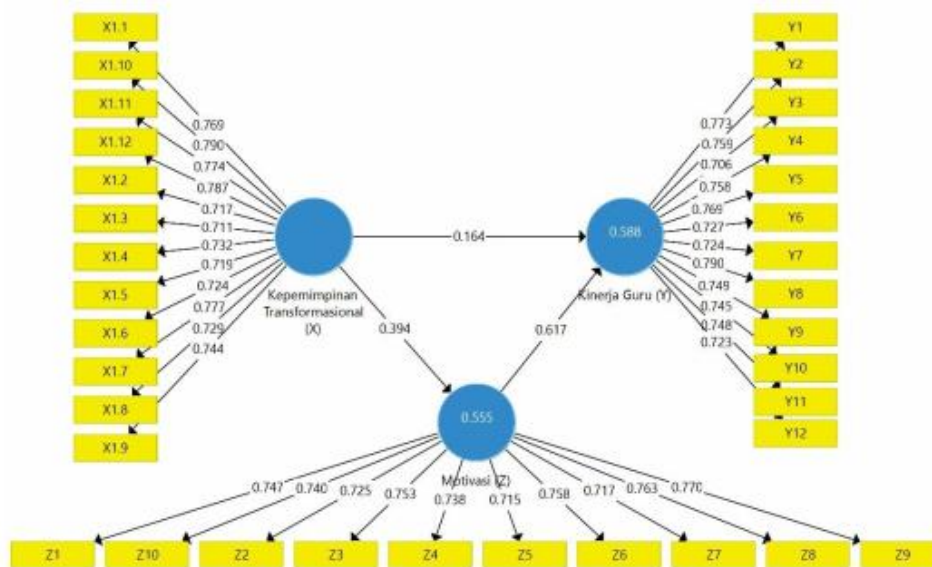


Figure 2. Model PLS

b) Validity Test (Outer Model)

The validity of the construct is tested through factor loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to ensure that the indicator actually measures the variable in question.

Table 2. Load Factor Values (Summary)

Variable	Range Loading	Information
Transformational Leadership (X)	0,711 – 0,790	All indicators are valid
Teacher Performance (Y)	0,706 – 0,790	All indicators are valid
Motivation (Z)	0,715 – 0,770	All indicators are valid

Source: Data processed, 2025

All factor loading values are above the minimum limit of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019), meaning that these indicators have a high strength of relationship with the latent variables they represent. This shows that each statement item in the questionnaire consistently reflects its theoretical construct. Furthermore, an AVE value above 0.50 indicates that more than 50% of the variance of the indicator is explained by its construct. Thus, the model has good convergent validity (table 3).

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE	Information
Transformational Leadership (X)	0,602	Valid
Teacher Performance (Y)	0,642	Valid
Motivation (Z)	0,638	Valid

Source: Data processed, 2025

c) Realibility Test

The reliability test was carried out to assess the consistency of the indicator in measuring its construct using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR).

Table 4. Data Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
Transformational Leadership (X)	0,865	0,889	Reliable
Teacher Performance (Y)	0,823	0,860	Reliable
Motivation (Z)	0,777	0,832	Reliable

Source: Data processed, 2025.

All Composite Reliability values are above the 0.70 threshold, indicating that the items in each variable have high internal consistency and that the measurement results are trustworthy.

d) Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

The R-Square value (R^2) indicates how much the ability of the independent variable explains the variation of the dependent variable.

Table 5. R-Square Value

Variable	R-Square	Interpretation
Teacher Performance (Y)	0,588	58.8% explained by X&Z
Motivation (Z)	0,555	55.5% explained by X

Source: Data processed, 2025.

An R^2 value on Teacher Performance of 0.588 indicates that nearly 60% of teacher performance variations can be explained by transformational leadership and motivation. This value falls into the moderate to strong category (Hair et al., 2019), which indicates that the model has a fairly high explanatory power.

e) Inner Weights Results

This test describes the magnitude of the direct and indirect influence (mediation) between variables.

Table 6. Direct Influence

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Information
X → Z	0,394	5,246	0,000	Significant
Z → Y	0,617	8,362	0,000	Significant

Source: Data processed, 2025.

The t-statistic value > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05 indicate that transformational leadership has a significant effect on motivation, and motivation has a significant effect on teacher performance.

Table 7. Indirect Influence (Mediation)

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Information
X → Z → Y	0,243	4,540	0,000	Significant

Source: Data processed, 2025.

Furthermore, table 5 shows that motivation significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance. This means that principals who are able to implement a transformational leadership style can increase teacher motivation, which in turn improves their performance.

4.4. The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Motivation

The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' work motivation, so the first hypothesis is accepted. The higher the application of the principal's transformational leadership style, the more teachers' motivation will increase. The highest indicator was the principal's attention and support for

teachers who were struggling (mean = 4,458), which reflected the leader's empathy and concern for his subordinates. Transformational leaders not only manage administratively, but also act as coaches and inspirators who foster enthusiasm, loyalty, and trust in teachers.

These findings are in line with (Bass and Riggio's, 2006) theory that transformational leadership generates motivation through four main dimensions: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Empirically, these results are consistent with the research of (Nurfasicha et al., 2021; Rahayu et al., 2019) which proves that transformative principals can increase teacher motivation through emotional and professional support that promotes improved performance.

4.5. The Effect of Motivation on Teacher Performance

This study proves that motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, so the second hypothesis is accepted. Teachers who have high motivation show enthusiasm, responsibility, and a strong work ethic. The highest indicator of motivation was teacher-to-teacher support and cooperation (mean = 4,458), which suggests that a collaborative work environment encourages teachers to work more focused and productive.

These results are in line with (Saputra et al., 2019) who stated that work motivation has a significant effect on teacher performance, as well as (Wijayanto et al., 2021) who emphasized that appreciation and positive social relationships strengthen teacher motivation and performance. Thus, increased motivation through rewards, teacher engagement, and ongoing professional development can be effective strategies to improve teacher performance in primary schools.

4.6. The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Performance through Motivation

The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance through motivation, so the third hypothesis is accepted. Principals who are inspiring, give clear directions, and pay attention to the needs of teachers can increase work motivation, which ultimately has an impact on teacher performance. Motivation plays a role as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of leadership on work results.

These findings are supported by research by (Nurfasicha et al., 2021) and Rahayu et al. (2019) which shows that transformational leadership not only has a direct impact, but also strengthens performance through increased motivation. Thus, transformational leadership becomes a strategic factor in creating a work environment that supports professional growth, collaboration, and teacher adaptation to educational challenges.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher motivation and performance, both directly and indirectly through work motivation as a mediating variable. Principals who apply a transformational leadership style are able to arouse the enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and commitment of teachers in carrying out their duties. In addition, work motivation has proven to be an important factor that encourages improved teacher performance, where motivated teachers show enthusiasm, creativity, and high dedication in learning, thereby contributing to improving the quality of education in elementary schools.

As a implication, the principal is advised to strengthen the role of a mentor and inspirer who provides emotional and professional support to the teacher. A collaborative work culture between teachers also needs to be developed to maintain motivation and work productivity.

For education policy makers, these results can be the basis for developing the transformational leadership capacity of school principals and continuously improving teacher professionalism. The researcher is then advised to add other variables that have the potential to affect teacher performance to enrich the research model in the future.

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