

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE MADRASAH PRINCIPAL IN ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to describe the transformational leadership of the madrasah principal and to explore the principal's efforts in enhancing teacher professionalism through transformational leadership at MAN 3 Banyumas. The research is a qualitative study conducted at MAN 3 Banyumas. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and document studies. The data analysis technique follows the Miles & Huberman & Saldana model, consisting of three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and data verification. The findings reveal that the principal implements transformational leadership behaviors at MAN 3 Banyumas and actively works to enhance teacher professionalism. The leadership approach, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has positively impacted several teachers, resulting in increased professionalism.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, madrasah principal, teacher professionalism

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process that cannot be separated from human life activities. It plays a vital role in fostering and maximizing the potential that humans possess (Fatimah & Mahmudah, 2017). According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, national education functions to develop abilities and shape character and a dignified civilization in the context of enriching the nation's intellectual life. It aims to develop students' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

The effort to achieve the educational goals mentioned above is not an easy task. It requires optimal and dedicated efforts in the implementation of education to produce high-quality graduates. One of the key efforts to achieve this is by ensuring quality learning. Quality learning can be realized, among other factors, through the presence of professional teachers (Elitasari, 2022; Prayoga et al., 2024). A professional teacher is an educator who possesses competence, integrity, and high dedication in carrying out their duties to educate, teach, guide, train, assess, and evaluate students. Professional teachers are not only instructors but also act as inspirators, facilitators, and role models capable of creating a positive learning environment that supports the holistic development of students (Eliza et al., 2022). It is also stated that professional teachers must possess four core competencies: pedagogical, professional, social, and personal, which are validated through certification (Kholis, 2019; Totto, 2021; Wahyuni, 2022).

The role of teachers in learning is essential because they are the ones who directly interact with students in the classroom. As the frontline of classroom instruction, teachers are a determining factor in the success of the learning process (Agustina & Syafi'i, 2023). Quality learning can be achieved when thorough preparation and lesson planning are conducted beforehand. By creating well-prepared lesson plans, it is expected that a conducive and interactive classroom environment will be established, leading to higher-quality learning. These lesson plans serve as a guide for teachers during instruction, ensuring that learning outcomes and targets are effectively achieved.

When teachers face challenges in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in classroom instruction, the leadership of a madrasah Principal becomes crucial. Such leadership must drive change, inspire action, provide motivation, and implement innovations in the madrasah to align with the demands of the times, thereby enhancing teacher professionalism. As teacher professionalism improves, it directly impacts the quality of classroom learning, resulting in high-quality graduates who are prepared to compete and collaborate in personal life, society, the nation, and the global community.

Transformational leadership by school principals can enhance teachers' professional quality by creating fundamental changes for staff, teachers, and students, grounded in religious values and cultural systems. This approach fosters innovation and creativity among followers in achieving the school's vision and mission. Transformational leadership is often associated with success in situations requiring significant change or innovation. It is a leadership style where a leader inspires, motivates, and empowers team members or subordinates to achieve higher goals, going beyond personal interests for the benefit of the collective or organization (Wijayanto et al., 2021; Windiawan et al., 2024). This leadership focuses on change and growth, both at the individual and organizational levels, emphasizing long-term vision, innovation, and transformation.

Transformational leadership by school principals has a positive impact on improving teacher performance. This leadership style can create a positive work environment, motivate teachers to continually grow, and enhance job performance (Hasibuan et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is also believed to balance critical thinking and reflection in the era of globalization. This leadership style fosters awareness among followers by generating productive ideas, building synergistic relationships, and achieving the organization's established goals (Akbar & Imaniyati, 2019). Based on this background, the study will analyze the impact of school principals' transformational leadership on teacher professionalism.

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative case study methodology was employed in this study. The present investigation employed a field research methodology at MAN 3 Banyumas, Kebumen. Techniques for gathering data include documentation, interviews, and observation. The triangulation technique is used to ensure the validity of the data. Additionally, the Miles, Huberman, & Saldana model—which consists of three stages—is used for data analysis (Miles et al., 2014). These stages are data condensation, data display, and data verification. Data condensation is the process of simplifying, selecting, or transforming raw data into a more focused and meaningful form. Data display is the step of presenting the results of data condensation in a systematic and organized format, helping to understand and analyze the information. The final stage involves interpreting the displayed data to identify meaning, patterns, or relationships, as well as verifying the conclusions drawn.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This study focuses on the transformational leadership of the school principal in enhancing teacher professionalism at MAN 3 Banyumas. The transformational leadership practiced at MAN 3 Banyumas exhibits various characteristics of transformational leadership behavior, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

1.1 Idealized influence

Idealized influence is one of the main characteristics of transformational leadership. Leaders with idealized influence act as role models, demonstrate integrity, and instill respect and trust among their subordinates. Based on observations, the principal implements the school's vision and mission through habitual practices and exemplary behavior. Despite living a considerable distance from the school in Purbalingga, the principal consistently demonstrates dedication by arriving at school early. In an interview, the principal stated that a school leader must set a good example for their

subordinates to foster a positive culture within the school environment. Additionally, this exemplary behavior serves as motivation for teachers to consistently strive to perform good deeds.

These findings are supported by interviews with teachers at the school, who stated that the principal consistently sets a good example for the school community. They noted that the principal's exemplary behavior inspires them to adopt similarly positive attitudes, particularly in terms of discipline. Discipline serves as a concrete example of how the principal leads by example. This study aligns with Salim's research, which highlights that the exemplary behavior of school principals is closely related to teacher performance (Salim, 2022). Zufani et al. further reinforce this finding, noting that the exemplary conduct of school principals has a positive impact on teacher job satisfaction (Zufani et al., 2017).

1.2 Inspirational motivation

This dimension emphasizes a leader's ability to inspire and motivate others through a shared vision, values, and goals. Providing inspirational encouragement is one of the responsibilities of a school principal, often implemented through policies. The policies set by the principal for teachers and staff have a significant impact on their enthusiasm and motivation to work. The principal can play both direct and indirect roles in fostering this spirit. A direct role by the principal can enhance enthusiasm for improving professionalism, while an indirect role can maintain the spirit of professionalism through effective use of information and communication technology, such as WhatsApp groups.

The principal can provide moral support to teachers, staff, and students through positive communication. The principal often uses encouraging words, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and collective effort to achieve significant goals. Based on interviews, the principal stated that maintaining good communication with everyone in the school community is essential to creating a comfortable work environment and achieving shared goals. This was confirmed by interviews with teachers, who mentioned that the principal consistently motivates them with positive messages. For instance, during staff meetings, the principal encourages teachers and staff to work professionally. These findings align with previous research, which demonstrates that motivation provided by the principal has a proven positive impact on teacher performance (Djafar & Nurhafizah, 2018; Sulisna et al., 2024).

1.3 Intellectual stimulation

In the context of school leadership, intellectual stimulation refers to a leader's ability to encourage teachers, staff, and students to think creatively, innovatively, and critically in solving problems or making decisions. In a madrasah, the principal needs the ability to develop both their own ideas and those of the school community. Developing ideas is an effort to bring improvement to the madrasah, as aligning ideas with the institution's vision and mission ultimately leads to enhanced teacher professionalism. Based on interviews with the principal, they consistently provide significant opportunities for all teachers and staff to contribute ideas and suggestions as part of realizing the institution's vision and mission. This is corroborated by interviews with teachers, who stated that the principal regularly gives teachers the chance to share creative ideas as part of efforts to improve the institution's quality. The principal strives to unlock the potential of teachers and staff by welcoming suggestions, input, and creative ideas from subordinates to be implemented and developed, fostering progress for both teachers and the madrasah. These findings align with previous research, which highlights that a school principal's role in implementing transformational leadership includes encouraging teachers and staff to contribute creative ideas to achieve predetermined goals (Aini et al., 2024; Mukaddamah, 2024).

1.4 Individualized consideration

This dimension emphasizes a leader's personal attention and support for the needs, aspirations, and potential of each individual under their leadership. In the context of a school principal, individualized consideration means the principal acts as a mentor or coach for teachers, staff, and students, using a personal and empathetic approach. In addition to providing guidance and coaching, the principal also implements policies to recognize outstanding performance by teachers and staff. These policies serve as a form of appreciation, with rewards that can be either material or non-material. Based on interviews with teachers, they stated that the principal consistently rewards all

school members who excel, particularly teachers who improve their performance. One of the principal's strategies for enhancing teacher performance is building relationships based on empathy and trust. The principal demonstrates trust in individuals by assigning responsibilities that match their abilities, which boosts their confidence and engagement in school processes. This trust from the principal positively impacts teachers' motivation and self-confidence, encouraging them to continually improve their performance.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that the principal implements transformational leadership behaviors at MAN 3 Banyumas and actively works to enhance teacher professionalism. The leadership approach, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has positively impacted several teachers, resulting in increased professionalism. The principal's leadership style, aside from being transformational, can be explored further to improve the quality of education.

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