



Enhancing Public Service Excellence through Transformational Leadership in Service Management

Aji Wahyudin^{1*}, Fadhil Akbar², Rohmad³, M Hanif Satria Budi⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Institut Agama Islam Faqih Asy'ari, Kediri, East Java, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: ajiwahyudin39@gmail.com

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the impact of transformational leadership on improving education in Islamic primary schools. The study was motivated by the increasing need for effective leadership in educational institutions to adapt to the demands of an ever-evolving society and foster a culture of excellence. Transformational leadership, known for its ability to inspire and empower subordinates, has been proposed as a key factor in driving positive change in educational environments. A qualitative case study approach was used, using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to collect data. The findings of the study indicate that transformational leadership in Islamic primary schools has significantly increased teacher motivation, collaboration, and commitment to school development. Teachers reported feeling more involved in the decision-making process, leading to improved teaching practices and overall school performance. The village head's leadership, characterized by openness, empathy, and teacher empowerment, created an environment conducive to continued growth. This study is expected to contribute to the understanding of how transformational leadership can positively impact educational institutions, providing valuable insights for other schools seeking to implement change and improve the quality of their services.

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INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership in public service management has become a strategic response to the complexity of modern society's needs (Hai et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2023; Faiz et al., 2023). In an era marked by increasing public expectations for transparency, accountability, and service quality, transformational leaders have an important role in creating significant change (Enang et al., 2022; Jarbandhan, 2021; Nasir et al., 2022; Arifin, 2024). They not only provide a clear vision but also motivate staff to work in an innovative way and focus on community needs. Social facts show that the public is increasingly critical of the services they receive, especially in the health, education, and government administration sectors (Erickson et al., 2021; McGann et al., 2021; Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022; Khotimah et al., 2024). Research shows that leadership that emphasizes individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation is able to encourage more inclusive and responsive service innovations. In addition, the use of technology by transformational leaders, such as e-

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government applications, has succeeded in increasing community participation and strengthening public trust in service institutions. This shows that transformational leadership is not only an ideal model, but also a social need in facing the dynamics of change and demands of today's society.

Previous studies have shown the importance of leadership transformation in various contexts, both at the village, education, and organizational levels. According to Tran & Vu (2021), transformational leadership focuses on achieving a vision of the future that is built through a shared consensus between leaders and members, where leaders function as translators of collective visions that are translated into real joint actions. Kehr et al. (2023) and line with Rachmad et al. (2023) also stated that transformational leadership is not just a process of exchange between leaders and followers, but seeks to elevate and direct followers towards higher morality and motivation, which ultimately results in moral and ethical changes for both. This was expressed by Peng et al. (2021) who emphasized that the effects of this transformation will be directly felt by members. Several related studies also discuss leadership transformation, such as Amrullah et al. (2022) research on transformational leadership in village educational institutions, Setiadi et al. (2023) who discussed leadership transformation in community empowerment in the Society 5.0 era, and Sanjani (2024) who examined the influence of organizational culture, work environment, and transformational leadership on the performance of police personnel in increasing public trust. These studies show that leadership transformation is not only applicable in the educational context, but also has an impact on improving organizational performance and empowering communities.

Previous studies have explored the impact of transformational leadership in various contexts, such as village education, community empowerment in the Society 5.0 era, and the performance of police personnel in enhancing public trust, there remains a gap in research regarding the specific application of transformational leadership in the public service sector. While these studies highlight the positive influence of transformational leadership on organizational performance and community empowerment, there is limited exploration of its direct impact on public service excellence, particularly in government institutions. Previous research has not sufficiently addressed the role of transformational leadership in driving innovation and enhancing service delivery efficiency within public organizations. Therefore, there is a need for further investigation into how transformational leadership can specifically enhance public service quality, motivate civil servants, and foster a culture of continuous improvement in service management.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the application of transformational leadership specifically within the public service sector, an area that has been underexplored in existing studies. While previous research has highlighted the broader impact of transformational leadership in fields such as education, community empowerment, and organizational performance, this study introduces a new perspective by examining how transformational leadership directly influences public service excellence. It explores how leaders in government institutions can drive innovation, improve service delivery efficiency, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. This research highlights the role of transformational leadership in motivating civil servants, enhancing their ethical standards, and aligning their efforts with the broader vision of public service, thus contributing to both individual and organizational transformation.

This study aims to explore how transformational leadership practices can drive innovation, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and contribute to better quality services in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Darussalam Summersari Kencong Kepung Kediri. This paper attempts to analyze how transformational leadership is implemented by school leaders at MI Darussalam Summersari to improve educational services and community involvement. The results of this study are expected to provide practical insights into how transformational leadership can be used effectively to improve public service excellence, especially in educational settings, and how transformational leadership can be a model for other educational institutions in similar contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach with a multi-site design (Priya, 2021), aiming to explore the implementation of transformational leadership in MI Darussalam Summersari Kencong Kepung Kediri. A case study is ideal for gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in its real-life context, making it suitable for investigating the dynamics of leadership and its impact on public service excellence in the educational setting. The choice of MI Darussalam Summersari as the research location is based on its significant role in the community and the opportunity to observe how transformational leadership is applied in a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Kencong, a rural area in Kediri, provides a unique setting where leadership practices can significantly influence the effectiveness of educational services and community trust. This study aims to understand how the leadership practices in this institution shape not only the internal school environment but also its relationship with the surrounding community, fostering trust and collaboration for mutual growth.

Data collection in this study was conducted using a circular process with three primary techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation by Table 1. Participant observation allowed the researcher to immerse in the daily operations of MI Darussalam Summersari, observing firsthand how transformational leadership manifests in interactions between the leaders, teachers, staff, students, and the community. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including school leaders, teachers, and community members, to gain insights into their perceptions of transformational leadership and its impact on educational practices. Additionally, documentation, such as school records, policies, and community engagement activities, was reviewed to understand the historical context and the formal and informal leadership structures in place. These triangulated data collection methods helped ensure a comprehensive view of the leadership dynamics within the institution and the surrounding village community.

Table 1. Data Collection Method

Data Collection Method	Purpose	Participants	Tools/Techniques	Frequency
Participant Observation	To observe the application of transformational leadership in real-time interactions within MI Darussalam Summersari	School leaders, teachers, staff, students, and community members	Field notes, observational checklists	Ongoing, throughout the study period
In-depth Interviews	To gather detailed perspectives on the impact of transformational leadership	School leaders, teachers, selected staff members,	Semi-structured interview guides, audio recordings	5-10 interviews, conducted

	leadership on school performance and community trust	community leaders		in stages
Documentation Review	To examine school records, policies, and community engagement materials that reflect leadership practices	School records, official documents, community engagement materials	Document analysis checklist, coding of documents	Once, during the early phase of data collection

The data analysis in this study followed the model proposed by Miles and Huberman in (Donkoh & Mensah, 2023), which consists of three interconnected stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the vast amount of collected data to highlight key themes related to transformational leadership and its impact on public service excellence at MI Darussalam Summersari. Data presentation was used to organize the findings into a structured form, such as narrative descriptions, tables, and matrices, making it easier to interpret the patterns and relationships within the data. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous verification, where emerging patterns and insights were checked against the data to ensure their validity and reliability. This rigorous analytical process allowed for a deep understanding of how transformational leadership is implemented in MI Darussalam Summersari and its role in shaping public trust and service excellence in the educational setting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Authentic Transformational Leadership and Its Characteristics

Transformational Leadership is a leader who always shows the process of building commitment to organizational goals and gives confidence to followers to achieve these goals. The initial leadership concept of transformational Leadership was put forward by James McGregor Burns, who applied it in a political context. Burns says, "Transformational leadership is a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of raising another person to higher levels of morality and motivation." Transformational Leadership tries to raise the awareness of its subordinates by calling for higher ideals of high moral values such as patience and humanity. In this case, Burns considers Leadership as a process, not an action that has its characteristics, so Leadership is explained as a flow of developing relationships in which leaders continuously generate motivational responses from followers and modify their behavior when they face a response or resistance.

Followers are elevated from their everyday selves to better selves. For Burns, transforming leadership can be shown by anyone in the organization in any position and involve people influencing their colleagues, superiors, or subordinates. Transformational leadership is not only based on the need for self-esteem. However, it raises awareness in leaders to do their best following the study of management and leadership development, which views people, performance, and organizational growth as mutually influential. In other words, transformational leadership is a type of leader who inspires followers to transcend their self-interest for the organization's good and can have a profound and extraordinary effect on followers. Based on this opinion, to become a transformational leader, he must carry out his duties through two characteristics.

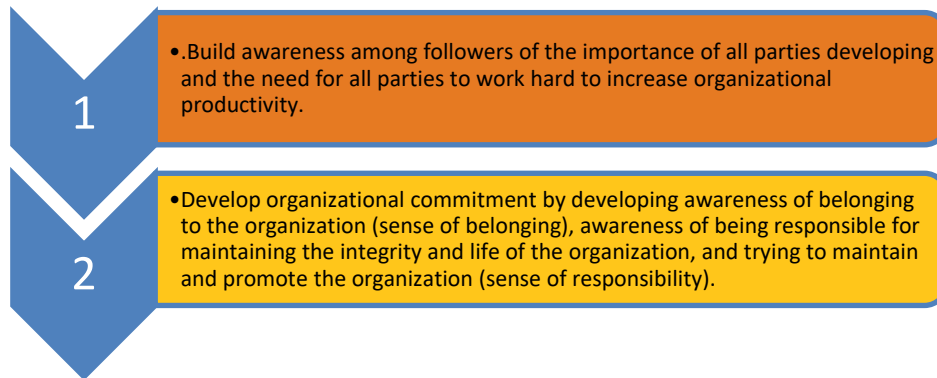


Figure 1. Illustration of Transformational Leader Tasks

Transformational leadership can be characterized as visionary leadership by Figure 1, as it focuses on bringing about change and acting as a catalyst for improvement. Leaders who embody this style are agents of change, driving systems in a better direction by enhancing human resources and generating strong enthusiasm and motivation among their team. They play a key role in inspiring quick action and serve as pioneers and carriers of change. Authentic transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of a leader’s authenticity, integrity, and honesty in guiding and inspiring subordinates. Such leaders are sincere and transparent in their behavior, words, and actions, addressing faults and problems openly while acting with integrity. They remain true to themselves, showing consistency in their personality and avoiding pretense, thereby building trust with their followers.

An authentic transformational leader also creates a shared vision and goals, which they communicate with enthusiasm, motivating their team members to actively participate in achieving those objectives. They are empathetic, showing genuine concern for the needs, aspirations, and feelings of their subordinates, listening attentively, and seeking to understand different perspectives. This empathy fosters strong relationships within the team. Additionally, authentic leaders empower their subordinates by giving them the autonomy to take initiative and responsibility for their work, creating an environment where team members feel valued and included in decision-making processes.

Authentic transformational leaders lead by example, embodying the values they promote and adhering to high ethical standards. They are committed to personal growth, not only for themselves but also for their subordinates, encouraging and supporting their development to reach their full potential. These leaders also exhibit resilience, navigating challenges and uncertainties with determination, refusing to give up in the face of adversity. Ultimately, authentic transformational leadership is about cultivating deep trust and building strong relationships between the leader and their team, creating a supportive and effective environment for growth and success.

Through high self-awareness and integrity, authentic leaders are able to inspire and positively influence those around them to achieve extraordinary results (Carvajal et al., 2023; Shwetha et al., 2024; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023). Based on these characteristics, a transformational leader has clear goals, vision, and mission and a comprehensive picture of his or her organization in the future (Ridlo & Yanti, 2023; Durrah et al., 2024).

Leaders, in this case, dare to take firm steps but still refer to predetermined goals for the success of their organization, in implementing work methods and procedures, developing staff as a whole, establishing partnerships with various parties, including daring to guarantee the welfare for its staff (Marisyah et al., 2023; Safitri, 2024). In addition, the relationship of cooperation and communication with subordinates is always considered, taking into account the individual differences of subordinates regarding work performance and the work creativity of each subordinate in achieving specific productivity. Leaders dare to take policies related to increasing the motivation of subordinates by giving rewards and awards according to the level of ability of subordinates to complete a task.

Implementation of Transformational Leadership in Village Development

The application of transformational leadership has the potential to build a high commitment from teachers to performance so that meaningful changes can occur in the village. Transformational leadership will also facilitate efforts to accelerate the growth of teacher capacity in developing themselves to respond positively to the village reform agenda. Transformational leadership encourages the growing sensitivity of organizational development and development, the development of a shared vision, the distribution of authority, and the building of a village organizational culture.

The application of transformational leadership has proven to play a crucial role in fostering high levels of commitment among teachers, leading to meaningful changes within the village. Transformational leadership facilitates efforts to accelerate the growth of teacher capacity, enabling them to respond positively to the village reform agenda. It encourages organizational development, the creation of a shared vision, the distribution of authority, and the cultivation of a strong village organizational culture. During interviews with teachers and village officials, it was evident that transformational leadership had a direct influence on teachers' motivation, which in turn contributed to improved school performance and community engagement. One teacher shared, "Since the village head began implementing transformational leadership, we feel more empowered and motivated to participate in the decision-making process, and this has led to more positive changes in our work."

The leadership process in the village is deeply connected to humanization, where the role of village institutions transcends education alone, becoming a vital part of community organization. As Peter Senge suggests, learning organizations develop individual potential through systems thinking, personal mastery, shared vision, and team learning. This concept was echoed by the village head during an interview: "The village is a community where everyone, from teachers to community members, must evolve. Transformational leadership allows us to grow together by embracing change and improving performance." It became clear that under transformational leadership, the village's performance shifted from an old structure to a more dynamic and forward-thinking model, aimed at improving overall quality and effectiveness.

Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of motivation, morality, and mental attitude among members of the organization to make the necessary changes for achieving higher goals. In the context of the village, the village head plays an essential role in implementing this leadership style. Interviews with teachers revealed that the village head's ability to act as a role model, motivate, foster creativity and innovation, and act as a mentor were pivotal in increasing teacher commitment to the village's

development. A teacher explained, "The village head always makes sure we are motivated and provides support, which empowers us to take initiative and be creative in our teaching methods." These leadership qualities have allowed for more meaningful changes in the village, as evidenced by the active involvement of the teacher council in program planning during village work meetings. The village head's leadership style, which prioritizes open communication, mutual respect, and autonomy for teachers, has been instrumental in creating a positive, collaborative environment where the teachers are encouraged to contribute their ideas for the advancement of education. As a result, the village head has successfully encouraged teachers and employees to work with a high level of commitment, ensuring the smooth implementation of village development initiatives.

The village head always pays attention to the needs of subordinates by trying to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and trust, trying to create mutual respect, sympathy for the attitudes of subordinates, having a friendly nature, fostering the participation of subordinates in making decisions and other activities, by prioritizing self-direction, besides that a sense of respect and self-respect from subordinates to their leaders, so that what is the task of the result of a joint decision can be carried out as well as possible. With the attitude of the village head leader, he opened up the broadest possible autonomy for teachers to improve the quality of education. The village head has carried out his duties well, namely encouraging him to actively work according to specific procedures and methods so that the work runs smoothly and achieves the goal of increasing village development.

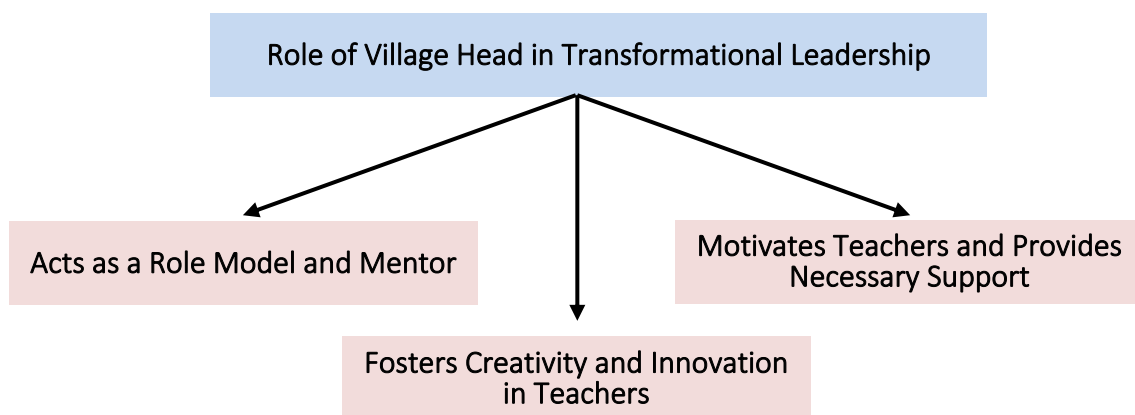


Figure 2. Chart of Role Transformational Leadership

The village head takes an emotional approach by taking the time to attend village events both held inside and outside the village by Figure 2. With his presence indirectly, subordinates and the community will feel cared for; he can also directly supervise these activities, which are then evaluated. In addition, he also pays attention to the welfare of his subordinates, such as salary issues, study, and work facilities. This means not only burdening them with policies mandated to his subordinates but also giving rewards as a reward for the work of his subordinates. In this way, it can support the community to compete in the best creations possible.

With transformational leadership, personal potential (village head) can be optimized and access sources from outside (teachers, employees, and the community).

Accessing external resources is only possible if the village and its community become open organizations (Zuhdi et al., 2024; Zaini, 2023; Ogona, 2022). This openness can be seen in how the agency receives input from outside while simultaneously responding to changes on an ongoing basis. The change in question is a gradual change towards an ideal educational culture or at least following what is desired. This ideal education is reflected in the needs of the community; if the individual needs of each of them have yet to be met, then the institution cannot be said to be ideal.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Service Quality

In interviews conducted with teachers, school staff, and community leaders at MI Darussalam Summersari, a clear connection emerged between transformational leadership and the quality of services provided. Teachers reported that the village head's approach to leadership, which emphasized motivation, support, and autonomy, positively influenced their commitment to the school's goals. One teacher mentioned, "Since the village head began emphasizing a shared vision, we feel more motivated to improve the quality of our work, knowing our efforts are appreciated." School staff also noted that the leader's proactive stance on identifying and addressing challenges, including providing necessary resources for teaching, improved their ability to meet the needs of students and the community. These observations highlight that transformational leadership can create an environment where individuals feel inspired and capable of delivering better service.

The role of the village head as a transformational leader was also confirmed in interviews with community members. Several participants highlighted the emphasis the village head placed on transparency and shared decision-making. A local community leader explained, "The village head always encourages us to contribute ideas for village programs. This inclusive approach not only builds trust but also ensures that the programs are aligned with the needs of the community." This participative leadership style, which encourages input from all levels, fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among staff and community members. Additionally, the village head's focus on empowering staff through professional development opportunities further ensured the enhancement of service quality, as employees were equipped with the skills needed to better serve the public.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of the village head's vision for long-term growth, which extended beyond day-to-day operational concerns. In one interview, a teacher remarked, "The village head always communicates a future-oriented vision, motivating us to not only focus on immediate tasks but also on long-term educational goals." The clear and consistent communication of this vision was described as crucial for fostering a sense of purpose and direction among the staff. When leadership is transformational, it encourages employees to think beyond their immediate responsibilities and take proactive steps to improve their work, which in turn contributes to better service delivery. The village head's ability to align the team's efforts with the broader vision of community development was integral in creating an environment conducive to positive change.

In addition to motivating staff and sharing a long-term vision, the village head's focus on innovation was also identified as a key factor influencing service quality. During interviews with teachers, one respondent shared, "The village head supports innovative ideas for improving teaching and service delivery, which has led us to adopt new

strategies and approaches." The willingness to embrace new ideas was particularly important in addressing the evolving needs of the community. For example, the implementation of digital tools for teaching and the integration of modern educational strategies were direct results of the leader's encouragement of innovation. The transformative impact of leadership was seen not only in traditional services but also in the adoption of technology and new teaching methods, ultimately enhancing the quality of services provided to the community.

The overall impact of transformational leadership on service quality was encapsulated in the final interview with a school administrator, who remarked, "The increased satisfaction from the community and the improved performance of our school are direct outcomes of the transformational leadership approach. Teachers are more dedicated, and community involvement has increased." These insights highlight the broader organizational benefits of transformational leadership, which not only improves internal operations but also enhances the relationship between service providers and the community. The focus on empowering employees, fostering innovation, and aligning short-term actions with long-term goals results in a significant improvement in service quality. Furthermore, the collaborative atmosphere created by transformational leadership fosters a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility, which is essential for sustaining high service standards over time. Through these findings, it becomes evident that transformational leadership has a profound influence on service quality, motivating employees, fostering innovation, and creating a sense of community ownership and participation. The leadership practices observed at MI Darussalam Summersari by Table 1, demonstrate how transformational leadership can improve service delivery and contribute to long-term organizational success.

Table 1. Key Concepts of Transformational Leadership

Concept	Description	Impact on Service Quality
Motivation and Commitment	Village head's leadership style emphasizes motivation and autonomy, which increases teacher commitment.	Teachers feel empowered and motivated to improve their work, leading to better service delivery and school performance.
Transparency and Shared Decision-Making	The village head encourages inclusive decision-making, involving both staff and community members.	Builds trust and ensures programs are aligned with community needs, fostering better cooperation and more effective services.
Long-Term Vision	Clear and consistent communication of a long-term vision for growth and development.	Teachers are motivated to focus on long-term goals, leading to sustained improvements in service quality.
Innovation and Creativity	Encouragement of innovative approaches, such as integrating digital tools and modern teaching methods.	Leads to adoption of new strategies, enhancing the quality of educational services and addressing evolving community needs.
Empowerment and Professional Development	Village head provides support for professional growth, ensuring staff have the skills to deliver services.	Staff are better equipped to handle challenges, leading to improved service delivery and satisfaction.
Collaboration and Mutual Respect	Focus on fostering a culture of respect, self-direction, and participation in decision-making.	Creates a collaborative atmosphere, improving relationships and leading to more effective service delivery.

The term "transformation" refers to a fundamental change in composition, structure, or character, and is synonymous with change, which is inherent in human life,

including in education. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the importance of inspiring and motivating teachers to exceed expectations, focusing on their development and empowerment (Kilag et al., 2023; Ataman et al., 2024; Sanjani et al., 2024). In an increasingly competitive and dynamic educational environment, institutions must adopt transformational leadership to adapt and thrive, as seen at MI Darussalam Summersari. Transformational leadership, as highlighted by scholars like Sliwka et al. (2024) and Pramesworo et al. (2024), emphasizes motivating and empowering teachers to innovate, collaborate, and embrace a shared vision. At MI Darussalam Summersari, this leadership approach has fostered a culture of mutual respect, increased teacher engagement, and improved school performance, demonstrating the significant impact of transformational leadership in driving positive changes in education and community involvement.

The realm of transformation is also experienced by village leadership to love a developing village. Leadership transformation is a shift from leadership that has not prioritized vision and inspires to leadership that prioritizes vision and inspires its members. Leadership transformation should not only transfer the "seat" of power from one leader to another but be accompanied by a change or transfer of form from the ideology of the previous leader and refined with a new form of leader ideology. This leadership transformation does not necessarily have to be identical/similar to the previous leader. However, a leader must still have a different character that is much better at carrying out his leadership duties.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style focused on inspiring and motivating subordinates by emphasizing high ideals such as unity, human dignity, and moral values. This type of leadership is often associated with change, as transformational leaders aim to guide their teams towards better, more effective systems. The concept of transformational leadership aligns with the idea of achieving substantial improvements by instilling a shared vision and fostering personal and organizational growth. Leadership theories have evolved significantly, and today, they are understood through various phases of development. In research conducted at MI Darussalam Summersari, it was found that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in driving positive change in education. Teachers reported feeling more motivated and engaged in the decision-making process, which led to improved teaching practices and student outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study regarding leadership transformation and its implementation of community trust in Kencong village, Kencong sub-district, and the results of the study indicate that there is a positive relationship between leadership transformation and the level of public trust. Leaders who apply a transformational leadership style tend to have higher trust from the people they lead. Effective implementation of leadership transformation contributes to increasing public trust in leaders and institutions. The implication of this research is the importance of leaders understand the importance of leadership transformation and how to implement it effectively. Leadership that focuses on empowering subordinates, building a shared vision, and creating an inclusive environment will positively impact community trust, one of which is making access roads to the village and obtaining house renovations for the less fortunate.

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