



Transformative Leadership in Educational Change Management: Enhancing Teacher Readiness for Centrally-Based E-Report Card Implementation

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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This study aims to analyze the role of transformational leadership in shaping teacher readiness for the implementation of a centrally mandated e-Report system as part of digital education policy. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school principals and teachers. The findings indicate that successful implementation of the e-Report system is not determined solely by technological readiness, but is strongly influenced by leadership practices that develop a shared vision, strengthen teacher commitment through motivation and organizational regulation, and enhance professional capacity through mentoring and role modeling. The study also reveals that organizational challenges, including technological limitations and disparities in digital literacy, are managed through open communication and adaptive, collaborative problem-solving strategies. Teacher readiness emerges as a form of professional awareness grounded in shared responsibility rather than mere administrative compliance. This study implies that transformational leadership functions as a critical mediating mechanism between top-down policy directives and school-level practice. It highlights the importance of relational, participatory, and context-sensitive leadership approaches in sustaining digital assessment reforms and strengthening educational governance.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, national education systems worldwide have undergone significant governance transformation driven by centralized digital policies aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and efficiency. One prominent manifestation of this transformation is the implementation of centrally based e-Report Card systems as

standardized instruments for assessing learning outcomes (Gabriel et al., 2022; Syarifudin & Muttaqin, 2025). This shift reflects a broader societal demand for data-driven educational governance and standardized quality assurance mechanisms. However, digital policy implementation in education is not merely a technical matter; it fundamentally reshapes how teachers plan, document, and evaluate learning processes. Evidence from recent studies indicates that digital assessment systems often challenge existing pedagogical cultures and require substantial organizational adaptation (Abedi, 2024; Llorent-Vaquero et al., 2024). From a public governance perspective, the success of such reforms affects not only schools but also public trust in national education systems. Therefore, understanding how educational institutions manage digital transformation is crucial for society, as ineffective implementation may undermine policy objectives, increase inequality, and reduce educational quality (Maulana, 2022; Mustafa, 2024). This highlights the importance of examining leadership and educational management dimensions in digital policy enactment.

Despite the strategic intent of centralized digital education policies, many societies face persistent challenges in translating policy mandates into effective school-level practices. A major problem lies in the gap between policy expectations and the capacity of educational institutions to manage change systematically. In the context of centrally based e-Report Cards, teachers are required to adopt new assessment standards, digital platforms, and accountability mechanisms within relatively short timeframes. However, educational management structures at the school level often lack adequate change management planning, professional development strategies, and leadership support. As a result, teachers experience increased workloads, role ambiguity, and professional stress. From an educational management perspective, this problem reflects weaknesses in key managerial dimensions, including strategic planning, human resource development, and instructional leadership. When leadership fails to align organizational goals, teacher capacities, and digital systems, policy implementation becomes fragmented. Consequently, centralized reforms risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative. This societal problem underscores the need for research that addresses not only technological readiness but also leadership-driven management processes that shape teacher readiness as a critical determinant of successful educational reform.

Empirical evidence from schools reveals that the implementation of centrally based e-Report Cards frequently encounters resistance and uneven adoption at the grassroots level. Teachers often struggle with limited digital literacy, uncertainty about assessment procedures, and difficulties integrating e-Report systems into daily instructional practices. These challenges are compounded by psychological unpreparedness, including anxiety, fear of evaluation, and skepticism toward top-down reforms. Field observations indicate that such issues are not isolated technical problems but reflect deeper organizational dynamics within schools. In many cases, school leaders focus primarily on administrative compliance rather than on managing change

holistically through communication, capacity building, and participatory decision-making. From an educational management standpoint, this suggests weaknesses in leadership functions such as organizing support systems, motivating staff, and controlling the change process. Without effective leadership intervention, teachers tend to perceive e-Report implementation as an additional burden rather than as an instrument for improving learning quality. This phenomenon demonstrates that teacher readiness is a multidimensional construct shaped by leadership practices, organizational culture, and management strategies within educational institutions.

International research has increasingly explored digital transformation in education, particularly focusing on technological infrastructure, system usability, and teacher digital competence. Studies by Abedi (2024) and Llorent-Vaquero et al. (2024) emphasize that successful digital assessment systems depend on teachers' technical skills and access to adequate training. Other research highlights organizational readiness as a prerequisite for digital innovation, stressing the importance of supportive policies and institutional resources. Meanwhile, leadership studies in education have examined various leadership styles, including instructional and distributed leadership, in relation to school improvement and teacher performance. Research by Hariyadi et al. (2024) and Subandi et al. (2025) confirms that leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational climate during periods of change. However, much of this literature treats digital policy implementation and leadership as separate domains. As a result, existing studies often fail to integrate leadership theory with educational management processes in the specific context of centralized digital assessment policies, leaving teacher readiness insufficiently theorized as an outcome of leadership-driven change management.

More recent studies since 2020 have begun to acknowledge the importance of leadership in managing educational change. Yakob (2025) demonstrated that transformative leadership significantly enhances organizational readiness by fostering shared vision and collaborative culture. Similarly, Jimeno (2024) found that inspirational and participatory leadership styles reduce teacher resistance to technology-based policies. Nevertheless, these studies predominantly focus on higher education or decentralized reform contexts. They rarely address mandatory, centrally imposed assessment systems such as e-Report Cards, particularly at the school level. Furthermore, teacher readiness is often treated as an individual psychological trait rather than as a product of educational management processes involving planning, leadership, and organizational control. Consequently, a significant research gap exists in linking transformative leadership with teacher readiness within the framework of centralized digital education policy implementation. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing educational management theory and for providing practical insights into how school leaders can effectively manage large-scale policy changes in highly regulated educational systems.

The novelty of this research lies in its conceptual integration of transformative leadership, teacher readiness, and centrally based e-Report Card policy implementation

within an educational management framework. Unlike previous studies that emphasize technical or individual competence dimensions, this research positions teacher readiness as a dynamic outcome shaped by leadership-driven change management processes. By viewing the e-Report Card not merely as a technological tool but as a catalyst for transforming teacher professionalism, assessment culture, and organizational routines, this study offers a state-of-the-art perspective on digital education reform. It highlights transformative leadership as a managerial function that aligns vision, motivates teachers, manages resistance, and institutionalizes change. This approach advances current scholarship by shifting the analytical focus from system adoption to leadership-mediated readiness, thereby enriching the discourse on educational leadership and governance in centralized policy contexts. The originality of this integration makes the research both theoretically innovative and practically relevant for contemporary education systems.

Based on the preceding discussion, this research addresses a central question: how does transformative leadership influence teacher readiness in managing the implementation of centrally based e-Report Card policies? The core argument of this study is that teacher readiness—encompassing psychological, professional, and technical dimensions—is not an automatic response to policy mandates but is actively constructed through leadership practices embedded in educational management processes. Transformative leadership is assumed to function as a key mechanism that aligns policy objectives with teachers' values, competencies, and commitment. By integrating leadership, change management, and teacher readiness, this research contributes theoretically to the development of educational leadership studies and practically to guiding school principals in designing effective leadership strategies for digital policy implementation. Ultimately, the study argues that without transformative leadership capable of managing change holistically, centralized digital education policies risk remaining administrative exercises rather than instruments for improving educational quality and governance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore in depth the role of principals' transformative leadership in guiding teacher readiness for the implementation of centrally based e-Report Cards. A qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to understand meanings, leadership practices, and organizational processes that emerge within the natural context of schools facing digital policy change. The case study design allows for an intensive and contextualized examination of leadership as a core educational management function, particularly in managing change, motivating teachers, and aligning institutional goals with centralized assessment policies. This design is appropriate for capturing complex interactions between leadership, teacher

readiness, and school management practices that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurement alone.

The research was conducted at SMK Miftahul Ulum Besuki, which was purposively selected because it has fully implemented the centrally mandated e-Report Card system and demonstrates diverse teacher characteristics in terms of age, teaching experience, and digital competence. These conditions make the site relevant for examining leadership-driven change management in educational settings. The research participants included the school principal, the vice principal for curriculum, and teachers directly involved in assessment practices. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to capture leadership practices related to planning, organizing instructional processes, supporting teacher development, and monitoring policy implementation within the school's educational management system.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying field data related to leadership actions, teacher readiness, and management processes. Data were then displayed in the form of descriptive narratives and analytical matrices to identify patterns and relationships among categories. Conclusion drawing and verification were conducted continuously through source and technique triangulation, ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. This analytical process enabled a comprehensive understanding of how transformative leadership functions as a change management mechanism within school-based educational governance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A Collectively Led Digital Change Vision

Transformative Leadership in managing changes in the use of e-Raports based on central policy is understood as a Leadership process oriented towards forming a collective vision, strengthening professional commitment, and empowering teachers to adapt to digital transformation in a focused and responsible manner (Sari, 2025; Tejawati et al., 2025). This Leadership practice emphasizes strategic communication, exemplary performance, and collaborative organizational change management to ensure teacher readiness in implementing a technology-based assessment system. This is in line with the results of the

researcher's interview with the Principal of SMK Miftahul Ulum, who stated, "Since the central policy mandated the implementation of e-Raports, we emphasized that this change is not merely an administrative obligation, but part of improving learning governance. We build a shared understanding through mentoring and habituation, so that teachers do not feel burdened. In principle, schools must move collectively, and leaders are obliged to set an example first in using this digital system." He then added, "With this approach, teachers are better prepared, more confident, and no longer view e-Raports as a burden, but rather as an instrument of professionalism."

These findings indicate that technological change in the school environment is effective when Leadership acts as a guide for organizational learning processes and strengthens collective work commitment. Coaching practices, digital role models, and participatory communication contribute to the emergence of adaptive readiness among teachers. This pattern aligns with research findings by Mastur (2023), which confirm that transformative Leadership encourages organizational member engagement through a shared vision and inspirational motivation. Similarly, Alakaş (2024) research indicates that transformation-oriented Leadership plays a strategic role in accelerating the adoption of technology-based educational innovations by fostering a collaborative culture.

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that teacher readiness for the use of e-Report Cards in line with central policy is developed through a structured change management process aimed at strengthening professional capacity. Change does not occur spontaneously but develops gradually through collective work mechanisms, institutional support, and clear role arrangements within the school environment. These dynamics demonstrate that digital transformation is successful when positioned as an integral part of improving the quality of learning governance, rather than simply fulfilling administrative procedures. This process results in a work culture that is more responsive, adaptive, and consistent with technology-based assessment system innovations. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of sustainable Development, strengthening coordination, and managing changes that are oriented towards the long-term quality of educational institution performance.

Teacher Empowerment through Mentoring and Role Modeling

Teacher empowerment through mentoring and role modeling is understood as the process of strengthening educators' professional capacity

through systematic guidance, technical support, and exemplary work practices demonstrated by school leaders (Karathanos, 2022; Li et al., 2021). This process positions teachers as subjects of change, helping build self-confidence, improve competency, and actively participate in digital transformation, particularly in the implementation of e-Report Cards as part of technology-based assessment management. The vice principal stated, "We provide mentoring in stages through direct guidance, technical clinics, and experience-sharing sessions. The goal is not only to enable teachers to use e-Report Cards, but also to ensure they feel valued and supported throughout the change process." Meanwhile, a teacher remarked, "We are motivated because the Leadership doesn't just give orders, but also demonstrates how the system works. When the example is real, we are more willing to try, and mistakes are understood as part of the collaborative learning process."

The vice principal's account aligns with observations indicating that the mentoring and role modeling process is systematic and structured, as reflected in teachers' daily work practices during the e-Report Card implementation. Field observations revealed direct tutoring activities, collaborative work between teachers, and Leadership involvement in providing examples of digital system use. Details of the observations are presented in the following Table.

Table : 1 Table Observation

Observed Aspects	Field Findings	Observable Behavioral Evidence
Technical Mentoring	Mentoring activities are conducted in stages via digital clinic sessions	Teachers work in groups, assisting each other, and receiving direct guidance from the mentoring team.
Leadership Exemplary	Leader practice using e-Report Cards with teachers	The vice principal operates the system and explains the data entry process
Teacher Collaboration	Collaboration occurs in solving technical problems	Teachers discuss, share solutions, and document application usage procedures
Teacher Adaptive Attitude	Teachers demonstrate readiness to learn and a willingness to try	Teachers test data input, ask for feedback, and independently correct errors

The Table above shows that the teacher empowerment process not only occurs at the policy level but is also clearly observed in organizational learning practices within the school environment. Technical mentoring occurs through direct interaction, while Leadership role models reinforce adaptive motivation. Collaboration among teachers and a readiness-to-learn attitude reflect the formation of a participatory work culture that supports the successful implementation of e-Report Cards.

The findings indicate that collaborative, role-modeling mentoring strengthens teachers' professional confidence and accelerates the adaptation process to digital assessment technology. Participatory working relationships create a sense of security, reduce anxiety about change, and build collective readiness for e-Report Card implementation practices. This aligns with the findings of Larsen (2025), who found that Leadership grounded in support and coaching positively influences teacher motivation and commitment in the school innovation process. Furthermore, research by Kang (2021) indicates that the success of educational transformation depends on dialogical mentoring rather than merely instructive mentoring, so that teachers feel part of the organizational renewal process. Thus, empowerment through mentoring and role models serves as a mechanism for strengthening an adaptive culture in technology-based change.

Overall, findings on teacher empowerment indicate that the transition to an e-Report Card system is effective when competency-building is supported by consistent guidance, shared learning spaces, and work practices that align policies and Leadership actions. This process not only improves technical skills but also fosters self-confidence, professional responsibility, and collective readiness to face the digital transformation in the school environment. The resulting dynamics demonstrate that mentoring and role models are strategic in building a collaborative, reflective, and performance-oriented work culture. Therefore, teacher empowerment through these mechanisms serves as a crucial foundation for the sustainable implementation of technology-based assessment system innovations at the educational institution level.

Strengthening Commitment through Motivation and Work Rules

Strengthening commitment through motivation and work rules is understood as an organizational management process that emphasizes the stability of teachers' professional responsibilities through psychological encouragement, performance rewards, and the establishment of clear and measurable work mechanisms (Maryani et al., 2021). This process aims to build

collective discipline, consistent task implementation, and adherence to operational standards, so that teacher readiness to use e-Report Cards develops systematically and aligns with institutional policy directions (Permana et al., 2024). The vice principal stated, "We strengthen teacher commitment by providing continuous Motivation and establishing clear work rules, from task allocation to e-Report Card completion deadlines. With this structure, the work process becomes more focused and accountable." One teacher added, "Motivation and strengthening rules make us more disciplined. There are rewards for those who adapt quickly, but there is also firmness to ensure everything runs according to standards. This helps us maintain consistency in our work."

These findings indicate that Motivation, combined with structured work rules, shapes teachers' professional commitment to e-Report Card implementation. The integration of moral encouragement, regulatory rigor, and internal oversight mechanisms fosters a sense of shared responsibility and compliance with digital assessment procedures. This pattern aligns with research by Sahrif (2025), which explains that work commitment increases when motivational support is accompanied by clarity of roles and organizational standards. Furthermore, a study by Maryani (2021) demonstrated that consistent operational policy management can strengthen a collective work ethic and stabilize the implementation of school innovation programs.

Overall, strengthening commitment through motivation and work rules contributes to a disciplined, directed, and shared responsibility-oriented organizational climate for the implementation of e-Report Cards. This process builds alignment between policy demands and practical readiness at the teacher level through precise work mechanisms, a stable coordination rhythm, and recognition for performance achievements. This dynamic results in a commitment that is not situational but instead grows into a professional awareness that supports the sustainability of schools' digital transformation. Therefore, strengthening commitment is a key element in ensuring that change is consistent, manageable, and contributes to improving the quality of assessment governance in the educational environment.

Barriers Managed Through Open Communication and Adaptive Solutions

Barriers managed through open communication and adaptive solutions are understood as a change management process that prioritizes participatory dialogue, open information, and the Development of flexible corrective measures as the primary mechanisms for addressing challenges in e-Report Card implementation (Camilla, 2025; Månsson et al., 2023). This approach allows

schools to collectively identify issues, minimize resistance, and build organizational adaptability to the dynamics of technology and teacher working conditions. The principal stated, "In the initial stages, the obstacles that emerged were not only technical, but also some teachers' hesitations about using the digital system. Therefore, we opened up communication through discussion forums and open reports, so that each issue could be discussed without blame." He added, "Solutions are not always standard. We adjust corrective measures, such as rescheduling, additional mentoring, and the provision of facilities gradually. In this way, obstacles do not become barriers, but rather part of the organizational learning process."

These findings demonstrate that open communication serves as a stabilizing mechanism in the change process, providing space for teachers to express obstacles constructively and preventing the emergence of latent resistance. The adaptive solutions implemented by the school foster a flexible organizational response, allowing both technical and psychological obstacles to be managed gradually and in a measured manner. This pattern aligns with Anggelina (2025) findings, which emphasize that successful change is influenced by clear communication and the involvement of organizational actors in the problem-solving process. Furthermore, Al Hakim (2025) research demonstrates that a culture of dialogue and shared learning is a crucial foundation for organizations undergoing technological transformation.

Overall, managing obstacles through open communication and adaptive solutions demonstrates that the change process is not a purely technical activity but a space for institutional learning that fosters mutual trust and shared responsibility. This approach fosters an inclusive work climate, where obstacles are understood as part of the transformation dynamic, rather than as implementation failures. Through mechanisms of dialogue, flexible coordination, and adjustments to corrective measures, schools can maintain the continuity of the e-Report Card program while strengthening organizational resilience to change. Thus, this obstacle management strategy contributes to the formation of an adaptive culture that supports the sustainability of digital innovation in the implementation of assessment governance in educational settings.

Based on the findings presented, it is clear that the transformative Leadership process in managing the change to e-Report Card usage proceeds through the stages of establishing a shared vision, empowering teachers through mentoring and role models, strengthening commitment through motivation and work rules, and managing obstacles through open communication and adaptive solutions. These dynamics collectively shape teachers' collective readiness to

accept and implement digital assessment policies, as conceptually illustrated in Figure 1, which displays the relationships between the components of the research findings within a framework of technology-based organizational change processes.



Figure 1; Transformative Leadership in Managing Change

The process of change toward e-Report Card usage demonstrates that school Leadership plays a more proactive role as a driver of organizational learning than simply as an implementer of administrative policies. This pattern aligns with Bass and Riggio's perspective, which emphasizes the role of collective vision, inspiration, and strengthening the meaning of work in transformative Leadership (Pitichat & Riggio, 2025; Septariani, 2024). The emerging Leadership practices not only mobilize teacher compliance with central policies but also build a shared awareness that digital transformation is part of professional Development. This alignment also reinforces Hallinger's view of school leaders as key actors in fostering readiness for technology-based change through value orientation and strategic communication (Adhiatma et al., 2023; Gustafsson & Dannapfel, 2025). However, the dynamics of change do not entirely follow the linear model of change proposed by Kotter. Rather than proceeding through standard stages, the adaptation process develops situationally through negotiation, open discussion, and policy adjustments at the educational unit level. This demonstrates a difference in orientation, with changes in the school context more closely aligned with adaptive social processes than with rigid procedural logic.

The mentoring provided to teachers demonstrates a tendency consistent with Leithwood and Jantzi, who emphasize the importance of professional support and coaching in strengthening self-confidence and commitment to innovation. The mentoring process is not merely technical, but also fosters a sense of psychological safety through Leadership role models. This practice also aligns with Fullan's view that the success of change is determined not by structural instructions but by a collaborative process that positions teachers as the subjects of learning. At this point, field findings contradict a top-down managerial approach, as the effectiveness of change emerges when interactions are

characterized by dialogue, appreciation, and participation.

Meanwhile, the structuring of motivation and work rules aligns with the theoretical work of Robbins and Judge, who emphasized the influence of role clarity, task structure, and regulatory consistency on organizational commitment. However, its implementation in schools is not mechanistic; rules are built alongside moral reinforcement, thus fostering not formal compliance but a sense of collective responsibility. This perspective aligns with Bush (2018), who emphasized that effective educational governance relies not solely on bureaucratic control but integrates support, coordination, and a sense of ownership of the program. Thus, the findings of this study are positioned at the intersection of transformative Leadership theory, organizational learning, and adaptive change management. Some theories were confirmed and strengthened through field practice. In contrast, others were contextually corrected because the reality of change in schools demonstrates a more dialogic, collaborative, and situational character than normative and procedural models of change.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that the success of e-Report Card implementation is not primarily determined by the system's technical aspects, but rather by how school Leadership builds a collective, dialogic, and adaptive change process. Teacher readiness is formed through a combination of clear policy direction, empowerment through mentoring and role models, strengthening commitment through motivational mechanisms and proportional work rules, and managing obstacles through open communication and flexible solutions. This pattern results in a configuration of change that positions teachers as subjects of transformation rather than simply implementers of policy. Thus, this research confirms that transformative Leadership serves as a link between central policy and work practices at the school level and as a key factor in maintaining the sustainability of digital innovation in assessment governance.

This study has several limitations that require methodological consideration. First, the study's scope focuses on a single institutional context, making the results unable to be broadly generalised to all educational units with varying characteristics. Second, the data obtained relies on the perspectives of internal school actors. Hence, the dynamics of change are not fully reflected from the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as parents or technology system administrators. Third, this study focuses on the implementation process at a specific time point, thus failing to capture long-term changes in teacher readiness patterns. These limitations open up opportunities for further research with multi-site coverage, a comparative approach, or a longitudinal design to enrich our understanding of transformative Leadership practices in the digitalisation of

assessment.

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