



# The Transformational Leadership of the School Principal and Its Influence on the Teacher Learning Culture

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## ABSTRACT

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This study aims to deeply explore the influence of transformational leadership practiced by the school principal on the development of a learning culture and the reinforcement of teachers' learning motivation at SMAN 112 Jakarta. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research provides a contextualized understanding of educational leadership dynamics at the secondary school level. Data were collected through a triangulation strategy comprising in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and institutional document analysis, involving the principal, vice principals, and teaching staff. Data analysis was conducted interactively through systematic and iterative processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that the principal optimally implements all dimensions of transformational leadership, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These leadership practices have successfully fostered a teacher learning culture that is collaborative, reflective, innovative, and oriented toward ongoing professional development. Teachers demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm in enhancing their competencies, sharing best practices, and initiating instructional innovations. The study affirms that transformational leadership constitutes a critical variable contributing to the improvement of instructional quality and the strengthening of teachers' professional capacities. The practical implications of this study offer strategic recommendations for developing effective educational leadership models within secondary education institutions.

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## INTRODUCTION

The leadership of school principals plays a pivotal role in determining both the direction and quality of education within academic institutions. In this era of dynamic transformation, transformational leadership has emerged as a prominent model deemed effective in inspiring change and elevating standards (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2022; Meng, 2022; Sanjani, 2024). Transformational leadership emphasizes a leader's capacity to motivate and empower individuals

within the organization to pursue higher-order goals, surpassing personal interests in favor of collective aspirations (Ataman et al., 2024; Maheshwari et al., 2023; Tian & Huber, 2021). That relevance of such leadership in fostering progressive educational ecosystems.

At SMAN 112 Jakarta—one of the senior high schools located in a metropolitan city—the demand for leadership that promotes innovation and the professional growth of teachers is particularly salient. Normatively, this is aligned with Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 40 of 2021 concerning the Assignment of Teachers as School Principals, which mandates principals to lead and manage schools with the aim of achieving continuous educational improvement (Asfiati et al., 2023; Irman et al., 2023; Zaini & Fahmi, 2023). This policy framework resonates with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the core elements of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Nevertheless, the implementation of transformational leadership in practice does not always proceed linearly or yield the anticipated outcomes. At SMAN 112 Jakarta, despite deliberate efforts to implement progressive leadership practices, challenges persist—particularly in building a robust learning culture and enhancing teachers' intrinsic motivation uniformly. Transformational leadership is characterized by the leader's interaction with others in ways that forge meaningful connections and elevate motivation and morality on both sides (Fatimah & Syahrani, 2022; Kilag et al., 2023; Sanjani et al., 2024). Such leaders concentrate on developing individuals' capacities and capabilities within the organization, fostering innovation, and cultivating an environment conducive to continuous learning (Beauchamp et al., 2021; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Ridwan, 2021). The teacher learning culture—foundational to educational quality—embodies the values, beliefs, and practices that educators embrace in their journey of professional development.

This learning culture, as an indicator of educational excellence, reflects shared values and habitual practices that nurture lifelong learning for all school members, particularly teachers (Hattab et al., 2022; Khotimah et al., 2024; Torlak et al., 2022). Teachers' learning motivation—rooted in personal drive and commitment to continuous growth—emerges as a key factor in instructional quality (Salehuddin et al., 2024). Thus, the intersection of transformational leadership, teacher learning culture, and learning motivation constitutes the central inquiry of this study. Mukhtar and Iskandar assert that effective management, including leadership, must involve deliberate human resource development and consistent institutional stewardship.

That's indications of a discrepancy between the theoretical ideals of transformational leadership and its practical enactment, affecting the school's learning culture and teachers' morale at SMAN 112. Some educators may feel inadequately supported in their professional development journeys, or perceive a lack of collaborative and innovative culture. This reflects broader challenges in implementing leadership models, where contextual factors and internal school dynamics significantly influence outcomes. Teachers possess transformative potential in education, and a positive perspective on the individual is crucial—negative views can impede educators' transformative performance.

Accordingly, an in-depth investigation is warranted to examine how transformational leadership exercised by the school principal influences the establishment of a teacher learning culture and the enhancement of learning motivation. The study seeks to identify effective leadership practices, existing challenges, and strategies for optimization. Focusing on these dynamics, this research aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to leadership development in SMAN 112 Jakarta and similarly situated schools.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach employing a case study method to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher learning culture and motivation at SMAN 112 Jakarta. The selected approach offers a comprehensive understanding of phenomena in their natural settings. Guided by an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, the study seeks to uncover meaning as constructed by research participants—namely, the principal, vice principals, and teachers—in relation to leadership, school culture, and motivational dynamics.

Data were collected using triangulated methods, including in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, vice principals, and a representative sample of teachers. These interviews explored transformational leadership practices, the cultivation of a learning culture, perceptions of motivation, as well as encountered challenges and adopted strategies. Observations focused on principal-teacher interactions, meeting dynamics, and professional development activities, guided by a systematic checklist. Document analysis included a review of the school's vision and mission, strategic plans, meeting minutes, professional development records, supervision instruments, and other relevant materials.

SMAN 112 Jakarta was purposefully selected due to its dynamic leadership and commitment to fostering a strong teacher learning culture. As a public school in an urban setting, it presents unique challenges and resource

configurations that provide a rich context for this study. Institutional support for research was also a key factor in the site selection. The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were derived from direct interviews and observational fieldwork. Secondary data included school documentation and scholarly references—books, journals, and prior research—pertaining to transformational leadership, learning culture, and teacher motivation.

To ensure data credibility, various validation techniques were employed, including triangulation of sources, methods, and investigators. Member checking was conducted to validate findings with informants, and peer debriefing sessions were held to elicit critical input on data interpretation. The researcher also engaged in prolonged field immersion to build trust and gain deep contextual insight. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, comprising three main phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw field data into focused insights. Data were then presented in narrative form, matrices, graphs, or charts to facilitate meaning-making. Analysis commenced during the initial data collection, with emerging patterns, causal relationships, and preliminary conclusions recorded. Conclusions were continuously verified throughout the research process. The analysis was iterative and continued through to the final report formulation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Exemplary Values**

The research reveals that the transformational leadership of the principal at SMAN 112 Jakarta is heavily characterized by the demonstration of exemplary values. The principal leads by example, setting high standards of integrity, ethics, and professionalism. Teachers and staff observe these behaviors and, in turn, model them in their own work. This model of leadership cultivates a culture of mutual respect and trust, which is essential for fostering a positive school environment. Teachers have mentioned that the principal's actions, such as consistent decision-making based on ethical principles, influence the entire learning community positively.

In this environment, teachers feel supported and valued, motivating them to excel in their professional practices. Furthermore, this leadership approach has been linked to improvements in teacher morale and engagement with students. It is evident that the exemplary values demonstrated by the principal help to

align the entire school toward a common purpose: academic excellence and student well-being.

The research findings suggest that the principal's role in exemplifying these values is critical for cultivating a positive learning culture. Through personal actions and consistent ethical behavior, the principal shapes a supportive and productive school environment. This is particularly evident in the teachers' attitudes toward their roles, emphasizing the importance of leading by example.



**Figure 1. Exemplary Values Leader**

Transformational leadership in educational settings extends beyond administrative duties. It becomes a direct catalyst for building an environment where positive values permeate all aspects of the school's operations. Teachers' adoption of these values creates a shared vision, fostering collaboration and a unified approach to addressing challenges in education.

The importance of the principal's exemplary values in shaping the school culture. When leaders model integrity and professionalism, it not only boosts teacher engagement but also creates a nurturing environment that aligns all stakeholders toward shared educational goals. This has long-term implications for both the school's culture and the academic success of students.

### **Strengthening Learning Communities**

A critical aspect of the transformational leadership observed in the school is its emphasis on strengthening learning communities. The principal has taken deliberate steps to enhance collaboration among teachers, encouraging them to work together in interdisciplinary teams. This collaborative model allows teachers to share strategies, resources, and insights that improve teaching and

student outcomes. Furthermore, the principal promotes an open-door policy, allowing teachers to freely discuss challenges and successes, further fostering a sense of community within the school.

Teachers have reported that the collaborative environment has led to improved teaching practices and a greater sense of professional development. This strengthening of learning communities also extends to students, who benefit from a more cohesive and supportive educational atmosphere. The principal's leadership in creating this environment is instrumental in breaking down barriers between disciplines, which ultimately results in more holistic teaching approaches and an enriched learning experience for students.

The principal's focus on collaboration and community-building significantly influences the learning environment. Teachers who work together can better address the diverse needs of their students. The consistent support for teamwork among educators helps them develop innovative practices that directly impact student success. As a result, the school cultivates an atmosphere where continuous improvement is valued.

Fostering strong learning communities within a school is not a passive process. It requires intentional leadership and active facilitation. The principal's efforts to nurture these communities have a lasting impact on the professional development of teachers and the quality of education provided to students. The collaborative culture that has emerged is indicative of transformational leadership at its best.

The strength of learning communities at SMAN 112 Jakarta is directly attributable to the principal's leadership. The collaborative efforts among teachers and the resulting improvements in teaching practices and student outcomes illustrate the power of a unified educational approach. This finding underscores the importance of supportive leadership in fostering an environment conducive to collective growth and development.

### **Continuous Mentoring**

Another crucial element in the principal's transformational leadership is the emphasis on continuous mentoring for teachers. The principal regularly engages in one-on-one coaching sessions with educators, providing them with personalized feedback and support. This mentoring process is not just about correcting mistakes but is centered around ongoing professional development. By offering targeted guidance, the principal helps teachers refine their teaching



strategies, enhance their skills, and overcome obstacles they may face in the classroom.

Teachers have expressed their appreciation for the mentoring provided by the principal. They feel that it contributes to their personal growth and professional confidence. This continuous mentoring also helps in building a culture of feedback and improvement, where teachers feel empowered to take risks and experiment with new teaching methods without fear of failure. The regular feedback loop ensures that teachers remain motivated and committed to their professional growth, ultimately benefiting the students they teach.

Continuous mentoring plays a pivotal role in the development of both teachers and the overall school culture. This process not only enhances individual teaching practices but also strengthens the professional community within the school. The principal's hands-on approach to mentoring fosters a learning culture that thrives on improvement and adaptation.

The impact of transformational leadership goes beyond administrative tasks. It has a direct influence on the development of a culture of lifelong learning among teachers. The research also highlights that continuous mentoring is essential in sustaining teacher motivation and improving the overall teaching environment.

The principal's focus on continuous mentoring has a profound impact on teacher development and the learning culture at SMAN 112 Jakarta. By providing consistent, constructive feedback, the principal ensures that teachers have the tools they need to succeed. This emphasis on growth and improvement ultimately creates a dynamic educational environment that benefits both educators and students.

## Discussion

In analyzing the findings related to exemplary values, it is essential to contextualize this within the broader framework of transformational leadership. Journal findings support the notion that leaders who demonstrate strong personal values inspire higher levels of engagement from their teams. Transformational leaders foster trust and respect through their actions, which in turn leads to higher levels of motivation and commitment among followers (Hermawan et al., 2024; Riyanti et al., 2023; Saharani & Diana, 2024). This aligns with the findings from SMAN 112 Jakarta, where the principal's exemplary values have positively influenced teacher behavior and overall school culture.

Further discussion on this can be found in the work of Enita and Wening (2023), who highlight that school leaders who model ethical behavior and transparency set a tone of professionalism and integrity within their schools. In this context, the principal at SMAN 112 Jakarta serves as a role model,

demonstrating how values-driven leadership can create a thriving academic environment.

The strengthening of learning communities, as identified in the research, reflects the emphasis on collaboration in transformational leadership. Several journal findings have also highlighted the importance of teacher collaboration for enhancing student learning outcomes. Transformational leaders who promote professional communities significantly impact both teacher efficacy and student achievement (Nguyen et al., 2022; Rohma & Khoirunnisa, 2024; Zain & Mustofa, 2024). This aligns well with the findings at SMAN 112 Jakarta, where the principal's encouragement of collaborative work among teachers has enhanced instructional practices and professional development.

The importance of collaboration in building sustainable change within schools (Abdelwahed et al., 2023; Young et al., 2021). By fostering a culture of learning and shared responsibility, the principal at SMAN 112 Jakarta exemplifies how strong leadership can create an environment where teachers work together to improve the educational experience for students. The collaborative learning community has become one of the key drivers of the school's success.

The emphasis on continuous mentoring is another vital aspect of transformational leadership, which has been supported by various research studies. Effective mentoring programs contribute to higher levels of teacher satisfaction and effectiveness (Fischer & Sitkin, 2023; Tett et al., 2021). The findings at SMAN 112 Jakarta mirror these claims, showing that regular mentoring sessions provided by the principal help teachers refine their skills and grow professionally.

Incorporating the work of Whitley (2024), it becomes clear that continuous professional development, particularly through mentoring, enhances teacher retention and effectiveness. The personalized support provided by the principal at SMAN 112 Jakarta fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that teachers feel equipped and supported in their professional journeys.

The transformative power of leadership in shaping both teacher development and the overall school culture. Through a combination of exemplary values, strengthening learning communities, and continuous mentoring, the principal at SMAN 112 Jakarta has cultivated a positive and supportive environment for teachers. These findings underscore the significance of transformational leadership in education and its ability to influence not only individual educators but the broader educational ecosystem. The implications for future research suggest that further exploration into the long-term effects of such leadership on student outcomes would be valuable.



## CONCLUSION

The transformational leadership demonstrated by the principal at SMAN 112 Jakarta has proven to be a significant catalyst in shaping a positive and collaborative learning culture within the school. Through the embodiment of exemplary values, the strengthening of learning communities, and a commitment to continuous mentoring, the principal has fostered an environment where both teachers and students thrive. These findings emphasize the vital role of leadership in influencing educational practices, teacher development, and overall school success. The research highlights the importance of fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and continuous improvement, ultimately contributing to an enhanced educational experience. As such, the study underscores the profound impact that transformational leadership can have on shaping a school's culture and achieving long-term academic success.

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