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PRINCIPAL TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL SCHOOL PROGRAM AT SDN PEMBINA BANGGAI, BANGGAI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe: (1) the transformational leadership strategy of school principals which includes the influence of idealism, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration in the implementation of the Model School Program; (2) the form of implementing the transformational leadership strategy of the school principal in supporting the implementation of the Model School Program; and (3) the impact of the principal's transformational leadership strategy on the successful implementation of the Model School Program at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type of research. The research subjects include school principals, teachers, and education staff. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, while the validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. The results of the study show that: (1) the strategy of influencing the idealism of the principal is reflected through exemplary in upholding the school vision, work discipline, and moral values that build a positive school culture; (2) inspirational motivation strategies are realized through communicating motivating visions, giving appreciation, and utilizing school success symbols to build collective work spirit; (3) intellectual stimulation strategies can be seen from the encouragement to teachers to think creatively, adaptively, and innovatively in learning and problem solving, especially in conditions of limited facilities; and (4) individual consideration strategies are reflected through the principal's attention to the needs, potential, and personal professional development of teachers. The implementation of these four strategies has a positive impact on increasing teacher commitment, strengthening the school quality culture, and the successful implementation of the Model School Program at SDN Pembina Banggai despite limited facilities.

KEYWORDS: transformational leadership, model school, SDN Pembina Banggai

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of basic education is a strategic issue in national education policy, especially through strengthening the role of schools as centers for the development of good practices. The model school program exists as an educational quality assurance instrument that places educational units as pioneers in the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) based on eight National Education Standards. However, in practice, the success of model schools is not only determined by the completeness of administration and structural policies, but also depends on the quality of the principal's leadership in driving a sustainable change in the quality culture. The main issue that arises is the limited ability of school principals to internalize quality values and implement leadership that is able to encourage the collective participation of school residents, especially in areas with limited educational resources and infrastructure (Hallinger, 2018).

In response to these issues, transformational leadership is seen as a relevant approach to answer the challenges of implementing model school programs. Transformational leadership emphasizes the ability of leaders to build a shared vision, provide inspiration, stimulate innovative thinking, and pay attention to the individual development of school residents (Bass, 2018). In the context of model schools, this approach is important because it requires the principal not only to play the role of administrator, but also as an agent of change who is able to instill a culture of quality reflection, professional collaboration, and systematic learning innovation.

A number of previous studies have shown that transformational leadership has a significant effect on improving school organizational performance and collaborative work culture. Leithwood and Sun (2018) affirm that transformational leadership contributes positively to the development of teachers' professional capacity and school effectiveness. Similar findings also show that weak transformational leadership practices are often a factor inhibiting the improvement of the quality of education in primary schools. However, most of the studies still focus on urban contexts or schools with relatively adequate access to resources, so they do not fully represent the conditions of schools in archipelagos and areas with limited infrastructure.

The research gap can be seen in the lack of empirical studies that specifically examine the transformational leadership strategies of school principals in the implementation of model school programs in the archipelago, especially in the context of public elementary schools. In fact, the geographical and social characteristics of the archipelago demand a more adaptive, contextual, and collaborative leadership strategy (Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, this research has an element of novelty because it examines in depth the transformational leadership practices of school principals in the local context of Banggai District, as well as expanding the scope of educational leadership studies in areas that have received less academic attention.

Theoretically, this research is based on the concept of transformational leadership put forward by Bass, which includes four main dimensions, namely idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. These four dimensions are the basis of analysis

in understanding how school principals implement model school programs through strengthening quality vision, teacher professional development, and cultivating the SPMI cycle (Avolio & Yammarino, 2018). Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of educational leadership theory, but also provides practical implications for the management of model schools in resource-constrained areas.

Based on this description, the focus of this research is the transformational leadership strategy of school principals in the implementation of model school programs at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District. The purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe the idealistic influence strategies, inspirational influences, intellectual stimulation, and individual considerations of school principals in supporting the successful implementation of model school programs. The results of this research are expected to be a strategic reference for the development of basic education leadership policies and practices, especially in archipelagic and underdeveloped areas.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research type with a case study approach (Yin, 2018). The selection of qualitative research is based on research objectives that are oriented towards an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of transformational leadership of school principals in the implementation of the Model School Program. This approach allows researchers to explore the meaning, strategies, and dynamics of leadership in a contextual and holistic manner in the school environment studied, without intending to generalize the findings extensively.

The research design used is a case study, focusing on one educational unit, namely SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District (Stake, 2018). This design was chosen because the school has special characteristics as a model school in the archipelago that faces limited educational infrastructure. The case study allows researchers to explore in depth the transformational leadership practices of school principals in a real context, including social interactions, organizational culture, and internal school policies in the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI).

Participants in this study consist of principals, teachers, and education staff who are directly involved in the implementation of the Model School Program. The participant selection technique used purposive sampling, with the consideration that informants were selected based on roles, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of the program (Ames et al., 2019). Principals were chosen as key informants because they have a central role in strategic planning and decision-making, while teachers and education staff were selected to gain diverse perspectives on the implementation of transformational leadership in daily practice.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself, in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research. To support the data collection process, the researcher used semi-structured interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation lists. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. The interview was conducted to explore the understanding, experience, and leadership strategy of the principal and the response of school residents to the implementation of the Model School Program. Observations were

made to record directly leadership behavior, communication patterns, and dynamics of program implementation in the school environment. Documentation is used to trace the alignment between program implementation policies, planning, and practices.

Data analysis was carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which included the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020). The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were first reduced by classifying and focusing the data according to the indicators of transformational leadership, namely idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a thematic narrative to facilitate the interpretation of patterns and relationships between findings. Conclusions are drawn inductively by considering the consistency of data and the results of triangulation of sources and techniques (Saldana, 2019).

This research was carried out at SDN Pembina Banggai with the research process lasting for approximately six months, starting from May to October 2025. The initial stage of the study focused on preliminary observation and introduction to the school context, followed by the collection of key data through interviews, observations, and documentation. The final stage of research is used for data analysis, verification of findings through member checks, and preparation of research report results. The duration of time is considered adequate to obtain in-depth, valid, and reflective data that reflects the actual conditions of the implementation of transformational leadership of school principals in the Model School Program.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The thematic analysis produced four main themes that were in accordance with the research questions: (1) the influence of Idealism, (2) the influence of Inspiration, (3) Intellectual Stimulation, (4) Individual Considerations. Each theme covers several sub-themes that are supported by empirical data.

The Strategy of the Influence of School Principal's Idealism in the Implementation of the Model School Program at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District.

The principal's idealism plays an important role in supporting the success of the Model School Program even though schools face limited facilities and infrastructure. The implementation of ANBK continues to run well through the use of auxiliary laptops and classroom arrangement as alternative exam rooms, which shows adaptive and solution-oriented leadership attitudes. This condition confirms that the idealism of the principal is able to strengthen the commitment of teachers and maintain the continuity of school programs effectively. As for the statement from KS;

"As a school principal, I emphasized that the school's vision is always used as the main guideline in every activity and implementation of learning. I routinely monitor the readiness and implementation of teacher learning tools as a form of coaching so that teachers' duties run in a directional and meaningful way, as well as fostering confidence and pride in work. In addition to building a culture of discipline, cleanliness, and mutual respect, the principal also showed

idealism in overcoming the limitations of facilities, such as continuing to implement ANBK through the use of auxiliary laptops, so that the Model School Program can still be implemented optimally."

Furthermore, the above interview is supported by the results of interviews with other sources, namely Gk:

"Our principal always emphasizes the importance of the school's vision and mission. He often asks about the learning tools we have made and confirmed whether they have been implemented. Such attention makes us feel valued and take responsibility for the direction of the school."

Strategies for the Inspirational Influence of School Principals in the Implementation of Model Schools at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District

The principal at SDN Pembina Banggai plays the role of an inspirational leader by building a spirit of joint work through positive communication, appreciation, and affirmation of school goals. Various school achievements, such as the implementation of ANBK and student activeness in religious and extracurricular activities, are used as a common motivation to foster a sense of pride and optimism among school residents. This strategy encourages teachers to remain committed to running model school programs despite facing limited facilities and infrastructure. The statement from KS is:

"As a principal, I provide inspirational motivation by instilling confidence in teachers and staff that their work has a direct impact on the quality of the school. The school's various achievements are used as a symbol of mutual success to build a sense of pride and collective spirit of school residents. This approach is strengthened through the strengthening of a culture of discipline, cleanliness, and mutual respect so as to encourage teachers to work more enthusiastically and be ready to collaborate in each program."

Furthermore, the above interview is supported by the results of the interview with GK, namely:

"The principal often gives us motivation. He reminded that every learning tool we make must be really implemented because it is part of professional responsibility. The way he delivered the instructions really motivated us to work better, especially since he also noticed the difficulties we faced."

Principal's Intellectual Stimulation Strategy in the Implementation of Model Schools at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District.

The intellectual stimulation carried out by the principal at SDN Pembina Banggai is evident through the encouragement for teachers to dare to develop creativity and review the learning approach they use. The principal not only checks the learning tools, but also encourages teachers to adapt the methods according to the students' conditions and the challenges of learning in the classroom. The statement from KS:

"The principal encourages teachers to think creatively by not fixating on old learning methods, but adjusting and developing learning tools according to the needs of students. In the face of

limited facilities, the principal directs teachers to be innovative, such as utilizing auxiliary laptops and arranging classrooms so that the implementation of ANBK continues to run optimally."

Furthermore, the above interview is supported by the results of the interview with GK, namely:

"The principal always encourages us to think more creatively in teaching. When he checks the learning tools, he usually asks not only if the document has been created, but what strategies we use in class."

The Principal's individual consideration strategy in the implementation of a model school at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District.

Individual considerations in the leadership of the principal at SDN Pembina Banggai are reflected in the personal attention to the professional development needs of each teacher and staff. The principal not only monitors the completeness of the administration, but also provides direct guidance related to learning tools, classroom readiness, and learning media needs. The statement from KS:

"I always try to understand the needs of each teacher personally. Not all teachers face the same challenges, so I often ask how their learning tools are built and used. From there, I can see who needs assistance, especially related to the use of technology or the preparation of learning media."

Furthermore, the above interview is supported by the results of the interview with GK, namely:

"The principal often gives us personal attention. He asked directly about our needs, especially regarding the learning tools, the media we use, and the challenges we face in the classroom."

DISCUSSION

The transformational leadership strategy of school principals has several things, namely idealistic influences, inspirational influences, intellectual stimulation, and individual considerations. Four key insights emerge with implications for theory and practice.

Strategies for the Influence of School Principal's Idealism in the Implementation of Model School Programs.

The idealism of the principal at SDN Pembina Banggai has significantly affected the successful implementation of the Model School Program even though the school faces limited facilities and infrastructure. The principal consistently affirms the school's vision as the main guideline and monitors the implementation of learning tools to ensure that teachers' duties run in a directional and meaningful manner, thereby strengthening teachers' commitment to the school's common goals. This strategy is in line with previous findings that transformational leadership is understood as a leadership style that is able to motivate, empower, and inspire teachers to achieve common goals despite organizational challenges (Supriatna & Rosmilawati, 2025). The implementation of adaptive and solutive school principal idealism in the context of limited facilities, such as the implementation of ANBK through the use of assistive laptops, is in accordance with the characteristics of the idealized influence

dimension in the transformational leadership literature that encourages leaders as exemplary models that increase collective motivation and staff loyalty (Effendi & Maunah, 2025).

However, these findings also point to limitations in external system support, such as a lack of community engagement and adequate digital learning resources, which have not been fully bridged through leadership strategies alone. This constraint illustrates that transformational leadership, although significant in its internal impact, still requires policy support, community participation, and teacher professional capacity building to achieve program sustainability more comprehensively. This is consistent with international studies that transformational leadership tends to increase motivation and a positive work culture, but its impact on improving the overall quality of schools also depends on the context and resources available. These limitations indicate the need for further research examining the interaction between transformational leadership and external resource support in the context of model schools in disadvantaged areas in order to formulate a more comprehensive implementation strategy.

Strategies for the Inspirational Influence of School Principals in the Implementation of Model Schools at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District

The principal at SDN Pembina Banggai carries out a strong inspirational role in the implementation of the Model School Program through positive communication, appreciation for achievements, and affirmation of common goals. The principal consistently uses the successful implementation of activities such as ANBK and student involvement in religious and extracurricular activities as a symbol of collective success to build a sense of pride and optimism of school residents. This approach not only motivates teachers to remain committed to running model school programs despite the limitations of facilities and infrastructure, but also strengthens a positive work culture oriented towards collaboration and professionalism. This finding is in line with the study of Ahmad et al., (2023), who stated that inspirational motivation as one of the dimensions of transformational leadership functions to create a strong vision, increase work morale, and strengthen commitment to educational organizational goals.

Furthermore, the principal's inspirational strategy in motivating teachers and education staff has had an impact on increasing the readiness and collective work spirit of the school, which is reflected in the way teachers respond to their professional duties and respond to learning challenges. Nevertheless, this study found that inspirational motivation is most effective when supported by a systematic system of reflection and follow-up because teachers' responses to direction are highly dependent on the availability of structural and professional support. In line with the findings of Elnaga and Imran (2018), inspirational leadership innovation is able to increase the intrinsic motivation of staff, but its impact on learning outcomes and the sustainability of model school programs requires adequate policy support and resources. The limitations of this study lie in the limited focus on the perspectives of teachers and principals without involving student responses or external stakeholders, so further research needs to broaden participants to describe the impact of leadership inspiration more comprehensively.

Principal's Intellectual Stimulation Strategy in the Implementation of Model Schools at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District.

The principal's intellectual stimulation strategy at SDN Pembina Banggai is realized through consistent encouragement to teachers to think creatively, reflectively, and adaptively in the learning process. The principal not only emphasizes the administrative completeness of the learning tools, but also encourages teachers to review the effectiveness of teaching strategies and adapt them to the needs and characteristics of students. This attitude reflects the intellectual *stimulation dimension* in transformational leadership, which is the ability of the leader to encourage followers to question old practices and find innovative solutions to learning challenges. These findings are in line with research by Suyatno et al. (2019) which states that the intellectual stimulation of school principals contributes significantly to increasing teacher creativity and the quality of the learning process in elementary schools.

Furthermore, intellectual stimulation is also seen in the way the principal directs teachers to see the limitations of facilities as opportunities for innovation, such as the use of assistive laptops and alternative classroom arrangements in the implementation of ANBK. This approach not only improves teachers' problem-solving skills, but also strengthens the culture of reflection and continuous improvement in the implementation of SPMI. The implications of these findings suggest that the intellectual stimulation of school principals plays a strategic role in building the professional capacity of teachers and maintaining the sustainability of model school programs, especially in areas with limited infrastructure. However, the limitation of this study lies in the lack of optimal measurement of the direct impact of intellectual stimulation on student learning outcomes, so further research needs to integrate student academic data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of impact. This is in line with the findings of Prasojo and Yuliana (2020) who affirm that the success of innovative leadership requires the support of a structured learning evaluation system.

The Principal's individual consideration strategy in the implementation of a model school at SDN Pembina Banggai, Banggai District.

The principal's individual consideration strategy at SDN Pembina Banggai is realized through personal attention to the needs, abilities, and challenges faced by each teacher and education staff. The principal not only focuses on the fulfilment of learning administration, but also provides direct assistance related to the preparation and use of learning tools, classroom readiness, and the use of learning media, including technology. This approach reflects the *individualized consideration dimension* in transformational leadership, which is the leader's ability to understand individual differences and provide support that suits the needs of each follower. These findings are in line with research by Prasojo et al., (2018) which stated that the personal attention of school principals has a significant effect on improving teachers' professional competence and work commitment in the context of elementary schools.

Furthermore, this individual consideration strategy has a positive impact on increasing teachers' sense of appreciation and confidence in carrying out their professional duties, especially in the implementation of the Model School Program. Teachers feel personally supported so that they are more open to conveying obstacles and are more ready to receive directions for learning improvement.

The implications of these findings suggest that individual considerations are an important factor in maintaining the sustainability of model school programs, especially in schools with limited resources, as they are able to strengthen collaborative and supportive working relationships. However, the limitation of this study lies in the absence of systematic mapping of the differences in teachers' professional development needs based on experience level or competency background, so further research needs to examine more deeply the differentiation strategy of school principal coaching so that its impact on the quality of learning can be measured more objectively. These findings are in line with a study by Breevaart and Bakker (2018) which affirmed that the effectiveness of individual considerations is strongly influenced by the consistency and sustainability of leadership practices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the transformational leadership of the principal at SDN Pembina Banggai plays a significant role in supporting the successful implementation of the Model School Program through four main dimensions, namely idealistic influence, inspirational influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The idealism of the principal strengthens the teacher's commitment to the school's vision and maintains the sustainability of the program despite facing limited facilities. Inspirational influence is able to build a collective work spirit, foster a sense of pride, and strengthen the collaborative culture of school residents. Intellectual stimulation encourages teachers to think creatively, reflectively, and adaptively in learning and management of quality programs, while individual considerations strengthen professional relationships through personal attention and mentoring according to the needs of teachers and education staff. The four strategies complement each other and form effective leadership practices in the context of primary schools in resource-constrained areas.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of transformational leadership studies by enriching empirical evidence regarding its implementation in the context of Model School Programs, especially in archipelagic and disadvantaged areas. The findings of the study show that the success of transformational leadership is not only determined by the internal capacity of the principal, but is also influenced by external system support and the sustainability of leadership practices. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve a wider range of participants, such as students, parents, and external stakeholders, as well as integrate data on student learning outcomes so that the impact of transformational leadership on the quality of education can be analyzed more comprehensively and objectively.

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