

The Role of Motivation in Mediating the Effect of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance in Asti Dharma Foundation Primary Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of motivation in mediating the influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance at Asti Dharma Foundation Elementary Schools. This study employs a quantitative approach with descriptive and causal designs. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a 1–5 Likert scale to measure transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and teacher performance. The study population consisted of all elementary school teachers at the Asti Dharma Foundation, totaling 168 teachers from eight elementary schools. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling, in which the entire population was included as the study sample. Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents, and the data were analyzed using statistical methods to test direct and indirect relationships between variables. The results of the study indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. Teacher motivation also has a positive effect on teacher performance. Furthermore, transformational leadership was found to enhance teacher motivation. This study also found that teacher motivation mediates the effect of transformational leadership on teacher performance. Thus, the implementation of effective transformational leadership and the enhancement of teacher motivation are crucial factors in improving teacher performance and the quality of education at Yayasan Asti Dharma Elementary School.

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INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a strategic tool for developing competitive human resources and acts as the spearhead of national development. In the era of globalization, the quality of education in Indonesia still faces challenges, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and science skills. This is evident from the results of education quality assessments, which have yet to show significant improvement. This situation highlights a gap between the demands of the times and the current reality. This gap is influenced by limited facilities as well as teacher performance as the primary actors in the learning process (Fullan, 2019). Therefore, the success of education depends on the role of teachers and the involvement of stakeholders.

High-performing teachers are capable of creating effective, innovative, and learner-centered learning experiences. As noted by Hanushek & Rivkin (2012), the quality of teacher performance not only impacts student learning outcomes but also serves as a primary indicator of national education quality. Thus, examining teacher performance in the era of technology and educational competition to enhance educational quality is highly relevant.

According to Robbins and Judge (2013), performance can be defined as work outcomes measured against specific standards established by the organization. In the field of education, teacher performance reflects their ability to carry out core duties, such as managing instruction, guiding students, and achieving educational goals.

In an era where digital technology is deeply integrated into the world of education, many private elementary schools face complex challenges, particularly a shortage of human resources to meet the needs of educational quality improvement. The appeal of the teaching profession among young people remains low, leaving the need for professional, creative, and innovative teachers unmet. Furthermore, the availability of facilities does not guarantee that teachers will be motivated to create engaging, meaningful, and high-quality learning

experiences. This study highlights the performance of elementary school teachers at the Asti Dharma Foundation through indicators of professional competence, work commitment, and the ability to collaborate with leaders and colleagues.

The results of the 2023 survey indicate that teacher performance has only reached 21.9%, signaling that managerial leadership has not yet been able to optimize human resource potential. Teachers still tend to rely on traditional methods, lack innovation, and have not been able to adapt to students' needs in line with contemporary developments. Therefore, the quality or performance of teachers is critically important to examine in order to produce individuals of character who are prepared to meet the demands of technological advancements.

Hattie (2009) asserts that teacher quality is one of the most significant factors influencing student learning outcomes, which in turn determine a school's level of success. According to Leithwood & Sun (2018), several factors can influence teacher performance, including the principal's leadership, the school culture that is fostered, and the teachers' own intrinsic motivation. The principal's leadership style, particularly transformational leadership, is recognized as an effective approach for motivating and enhancing teacher performance (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Transformational leadership with its ability to inspire, its visionary nature that stimulates intellectual growth, and its support for every individual within an institution can encourage teachers to take proper responsibility for their duties and obligations as educators.

Bass & Riggio (2006) and Gumus et al. (2018) state that one leadership style considered relevant for driving positive change in schools is transformational leadership. This leadership style emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, provide individual attention, and encourage teachers' creativity in carrying out their duties. The school principal plays a central role as a leader of learning and an institutional manager. A number of studies indicate that transformational leadership has a positive impact

on teacher performance, both directly and indirectly (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006; Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

According to Mulayasa (2004), school principals, as educational leaders, play a key role in mobilizing and directing all school resources to achieve the educational vision. The principal's role is not merely administrative but also strategic in fostering an effective learning environment. Bass and Avolio (1994), in their theory of transformational leadership, state that educational leaders must be able to drive change and innovation within the school environment, ensuring that education encompasses not only academic knowledge but also character development and values.

The principal's transformational leadership can serve to ignite and sustain teachers' intrinsic motivation, and this motivation is the primary driver of their performance improvement. In an educational setting, motivation is a critical factor determining the quality of performance to achieve effective and optimal outcomes. Teachers' motivation plays a vital role in determining the success of the principal's leadership in realizing quality education. Teachers with high motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, will be more easily inspired by the principal's transformational leadership in carrying out their duties, thereby motivating them to improve their performance (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Conversely, low motivation can weaken the influence of the principal's leadership on teacher performance. Teachers with high motivation will be more enthusiastic, consistent, and capable of facing challenges in the learning process. Thus, teacher motivation in this study is positioned as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between the principal's transformational leadership and teacher performance. This aligns with research by Tajasom and Ahmad (2011) and Cerit (2012), which demonstrated that motivation can strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze the effect of the principal's transformational leadership style on teacher performance, the effect of teacher motivation on teacher performance, the effect of transformational leadership style on teacher motivation, and the role of teacher motivation as a mediating variable at Yayasan Asti Dharma Elementary School. Accordingly, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: The principal's transformational leadership style has a positive effect on teacher performance.

H2: Teacher motivation has a positive effect on teacher performance.

H3: The principal's transformational leadership style has a positive effect on teacher motivation.

H4: Teacher motivation mediates the effect of the principal's transformational leadership style on teacher performance.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive and causal design. A quantitative approach was chosen to obtain objective and measurable results regarding the variables under study (Sugiyono, 2017). The researcher used a closed-ended questionnaire (1–5 Likert scale) to collect data regarding the principal's leadership style and its impact on teacher performance, mediated by teacher motivation and moderated by school culture.

The population in this study consists of all elementary school teachers at the Asti Dharma Foundation, totaling 168 teachers from eight elementary schools. This study employed a saturated sampling technique (non-probability sampling), wherein the entire population was selected as the study sample. This technique was chosen because the population size was relatively small, and all members of the population possessed characteristics aligned with the study's requirements.

Data collection was conducted via questionnaires administered to school principals and teachers. School principals assessed teachers' motivation and performance, while teachers evaluated school culture and the principal's

leadership. Respondents answered using a five-point Likert scale. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the t-test and F-test to examine the direct effects between variables through

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Variabel Relationship	Sig. Value	Coefficient	Conclusion
H1	Transformational Leadership → Teacher Performance	0.000	0.173	Accepted
H2	Teacher Motivation → Teacher Performance	0.000	0.781	Accepted
H3	Transformational Leadership → Teacher Motivation	0.000	0.569	Accepted
H4	Transformational Leadership → Teacher Motivation → Teacher Performance	0.000	0.444	Accepted

Source: Processed research data, 2026

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it was found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a significance value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 0.173. These results indicate that the better transformational leadership is implemented, the higher the teachers' performance. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

Regarding the second hypothesis (H2), teacher motivation was found to have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a significance value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 0.781. These results indicate that teacher motivation plays a strong role in enhancing teacher performance. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted.

Furthermore, the results of the third hypothesis (H3) test show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher motivation with a significance value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 0.569. This means that the better the transformational leadership style applied, the higher the teacher motivation will be. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted.

In their studies, Wang et al. (2011) and Leithwood and Sun (2018) confirm that transformational leadership can improve performance by providing vision, motivation, and professional support. The positive influence

multiple linear regression analysis. Furthermore, the mediating effect was tested using the bootstrapping technique.

Regarding the fourth hypothesis (H4), the results indicate that transformational leadership influences teacher performance through teacher motivation as a mediating variable, with a significance value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 0.444. These results indicate that teacher motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance

This study shows that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance at the Asti Dharma Foundation elementary schools. These findings are consistent with the concept of transformational leadership, which states that leaders can improve the performance of their subordinates through the process of internalizing values and commitment to organizational goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In a school setting, a principal who serves as a role model and provides professional support will encourage teachers to work more effectively.

of transformational leadership, which employs behavioral patterns emphasizing a clear vision, inspires, and motivates both simultaneously and individually fosters awareness of teachers' duties and responsibilities in carrying out their tasks.

These findings align with the views of Bass & Riggio (2006), who assert that transformational leadership empowers members rather than merely commanding them to achieve the vision and mission. Thus, teachers who are entrusted with the responsibility and given opportunities to innovate in teaching methods, along with their professionalism as educators, automatically lead to improved performance capable of exceeding the minimum standards expected of a teacher.

The intellectual simulation implemented by the principal motivates teachers to evaluate and improve their teaching using various approaches that are increasingly effective in fostering student development. This aligns with the research by Gumusluoğlu & Ilsev (2009) in the *Journal of Business Research*, which states that creativity and individual performance are products of leadership that support risk-taking and continuous learning.

Principals who serve as mentors or coaches empower teachers to tackle the challenges of a dynamic curriculum. These results are also consistent with various empirical studies that found transformational leadership significantly contributes to improved teacher performance through the creation of a supportive and development-oriented work environment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

Thus, it can be concluded that transformational leadership is a highly valuable non-material asset for the Asti Dharma Foundation, particularly within its elementary education units, in enhancing teacher performance and educational quality. Optimal teacher performance in elementary schools under the Asti Dharma Foundation is the result of a positive reciprocal relationship between the principal and the teachers. The principal, together with all teachers, transforms and collaborates to effectively realize the school's vision and mission.

Teachers within the Asti Dharma Foundation who are highly motivated do not merely fulfill the duties and responsibilities outlined in their employment contracts; rather, they are willing to devote extra time to mentoring students or fellow teachers to help them improve

The Influence of Teacher Motivation on Teacher Performance.

The Effect of Teacher Motivation on Teacher Performance

High-quality teacher performance stems from the strong personal drive of each teacher at the Asti Dharma Foundation in carrying out their duties as educators. Motivation serves as the driving force behind their work, even for teachers with advanced educational backgrounds. The research findings confirm that H2 is accepted, meaning that the higher a teacher's motivation, the better their performance quality becomes. This finding aligns with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing individual performance quality (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Teachers with high motivation tend to demonstrate greater commitment, creativity, and responsibility in carrying out their teaching duties.

Teachers with strong motivation are prepared to face difficulties or challenges when dealing with students of diverse backgrounds. Limited facilities encourage teachers to innovate by focusing on students' needs in order to effectively prepare and deliver instruction. These research findings are also supported by the views of Richardson & Watt (2006) in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, who state that motivation is the primary predictor of teachers' persistence in implementing high-quality instructional strategies in the classroom. The consistency of teachers' performance is underpinned by the strength of their motivation. This is also consistent with the view of Hidayati and Santoso (2019), who argue that high levels of teacher work motivation contribute to improved school academic performance, as teachers tend to demonstrate better discipline, consistency, and responsibility in carrying out their duties.

their performance beyond standard benchmarks, as reflected in the annual teacher performance evaluation indicators for each unit. The research findings align with those of Khofifah and Al Banin (2023), revealing that work motivation has a significant influence on improving teacher

performance, particularly regarding the quality of learning and organizational engagement.

Teacher performance, which is largely influenced by motivation, demonstrates that motivation serves as the primary driving force in developing all the capabilities teachers possess. These findings are reinforced by Hasibuan's (2017) research, which emphasizes that work motivation is one of the primary factors determining an individual's success in achieving professional accomplishments. Empirically, these results are supported by studies showing that work motivation has a direct impact on teacher performance, as it serves as the primary driver of productive and innovative work behavior (Han & Yin, 2016).

Thus, it can be concluded that teacher motivation has a significant impact on improving teacher performance, as expected by educational institutions. Teacher motivation is an investment that must be nurtured and enhanced, no less important than pedagogical development and training for teachers. Since motivation serves as the driving force behind all the competencies teachers possess to achieve optimal performance, without strong motivation, the knowledge, skills, and potential that teachers possess will not be effectively translated into the actual performance required in elementary education within the Asti Dharma Foundation.

Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Motivation

Based on the research findings, it was discovered that transformational leadership drives teachers' intrinsic motivation through an inspiring vision that is clearly communicated. This motivation enables teachers to perform routine tasks with a sense of purpose, initiative, and greater professionalism in educating the nation's children entrusted to educational institutions within the Asti Dharma Foundation. This study aligns with the views of Eyal & Roth (2011), who emphasize that leadership significantly reduces levels of control-based (extrinsic) motivation and enhances more sustainable autonomous motivation. Rahayu and Putri (2018) also highlight that communicative

leaders can boost teachers' intrinsic motivation to plan and implement more meaningful learning.

Furthermore, the principal's greetings, attention, and support for each individual foster a sense of belonging and high levels of attachment between leaders and teachers or between the school and teachers. Teachers feel they are not merely workers seeking wages or salaries alone. The psychological aspect teachers' basic human need for attention is fulfilled through transformational leadership. These research findings align with Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which states that the fulfillment of psychological needs for relatedness and autonomy serves as the primary fuel for human intrinsic motivation.

This study is also supported by Moolenaar et al. (2010), who demonstrated that the support and social relationships fostered by transformational leaders are highly effective in maintaining teachers' motivation amid the complexity and ever-changing challenges of education, with all its demands. Transformational leadership supports teachers and prepares them to face any changes that arise. Yuliani et al. (2020) also emphasize that by implementing transformational leadership, teachers' work motivation will increase, leading to innovation in teaching and enhancing their professional competence as educators.

Thus, it can be concluded that in this study, transformational leadership acts as an effective motivator for teachers in the elementary education environment of the Asti Dharma Foundation. The school principal's ability to implement transformational leadership has a positive impact on enhancing teacher motivation, which inspires and embraces each individual as a crucial element in developing professional competence and teacher performance within the Asti Dharma Foundation's elementary education units. The principal at the Asti Dharma educational institution has proven capable of motivating teachers to build discipline for continuous self-development, which contributes positively to the overall improvement of teacher performance in the elementary schools within the Asti Dharma environment.

The Role of Teacher Motivation as a Mediating Variable in the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Performance

The results of this study demonstrate that teacher motivation significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance. Therefore, H4 is accepted. This indicates a mechanism whereby transformational leadership in elementary schools under the Asti Dharma Foundation does not directly improve teacher performance but rather through an intermediary process by stimulating teachers' motivation and work enthusiasm. By addressing the aspect of teacher motivation, transformational leadership is able to significantly improve teacher performance.

Theoretically, these findings align with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing individual performance within an institution (Decy & Ryan, 2000). Baron & Kenny (1986) also noted something similar in their mediation model, stating that the mediating variable serves as a mechanism that explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Transformational leadership operates effectively through the intermediary of intrinsic motivation possessed and developed by each teacher.

These findings are consistent with the leadership model research by Sun & Leithwood (2012), which confirms that school leaders influence student learning outcomes indirectly through mediating variables such as teacher motivation, commitment, and capacity. Motivation acts as a bridge that channels the leader's positive influence into teachers' actual actions. Sari et al. (2019) also support this finding, stating that teachers' work motivation serves as a channel of influence between the principal's transformational leadership and teacher performance.

These findings also indicate that, in practice, transformational leadership is capable of fostering a positive psychological mindset among teachers as they face various pressures and challenges through guidance, support, and

motivation. This aligns with the findings of Nugroho (2018) and Pratiwi (2020) that teacher work motivation mediates the relationship between school principal leadership and academic performance, thereby strengthening the influence of leadership on teachers' work outcomes. The role of teacher motivation as a mediator in this study demonstrates a strong link between the quality of transformational leadership and well-established teacher mental well-being, enabling the achievement of educational targets within educational institutions under the Asti Dharma Foundation.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that teacher motivation plays a strategic role as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance, particularly in elementary schools under the Asti Dharma Foundation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, all hypotheses proposed in this study were accepted because the relationships among variables were proven to be significant. The findings show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance. This indicates that effective leadership practices are able to encourage teachers to perform better in carrying out their professional responsibilities. Teacher motivation was also found to positively influence teacher performance, meaning that teachers with higher motivation tend to demonstrate higher levels of performance. In addition, transformational leadership positively affects teacher motivation, suggesting that leaders who inspire, support, and motivate teachers can strengthen their work motivation. Furthermore, teacher motivation was proven to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance. This means that transformational leadership can improve teacher performance both directly and indirectly through increased teacher motivation. Therefore, educational institutions should focus on strengthening transformational leadership and enhancing teacher motivation as important

strategies to improve overall teacher performance.

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