



Transformational Leadership in Agricultural Extension Services: Evidence from Batanghari, East Lampung, Indonesia

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Abstract

Background. Leadership plays an important role in supporting the effectiveness of agricultural extension organizations, especially in building motivation, trust, and the capacity of extension workers to carry out their duties.

Objectives. This study aims to analyze the application of the transformational leadership style of the Extension Coordinator at the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) of Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency.

Methods. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with key data obtained through interviews with eight informants. The analysis focused on four dimensions of transformational leadership, namely *idealized influence–charisma*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration*.

Results. The results show that the Extension Coordinator demonstrates transformational leadership by building trust and setting an example, providing motivation and inspiration, directing problem-solving, and serving as a mentor through knowledge sharing, mentoring, and evaluation activities. In the individual attention dimension, the Extension Coordinator shows respect for subordinates regardless of position, pays attention to their needs and expectations, and provides space for the delivery of ideas and inputs. However, it was found that there is a difference in informants' perceptions regarding the consistency of leaders in respecting subordinate ideas, which shows that the aspects of openness and participation still need to be strengthened.

Conclusion. This study concludes that transformational leadership practices have been applied in the management of agricultural extension organizations in BPP Batanghari District, although strengthening appreciation for subordinate ideas is needed to create more participatory leadership.

Implementation. These findings affirm the importance of transformational leadership in building an extension work environment that supports motivation, capacity building, and engagement of organizational members.

Keywords: transformational leadership; extension coordinator; agricultural extension worker; agricultural extension center; extension organization



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INTRODUCTION

Agricultural extension plays a strategic role in agricultural development because it improves farmers' knowledge, skills, and abilities to deal with changes in technology, the business environment, and various problems in agricultural activities. The success of extension implementation is determined not only by the individual competence of extension workers, but also by the organization's ability to direct, coordinate, and develop its human resources. In this context, the leadership of the Extension Coordinator (Korluh) is an important element in supporting the effectiveness of implementing extension activities at the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) level.

The Extension Coordinator directs, coordinates, provides instructions, and supports extension workers in carrying out their duties. Effective leadership is needed because extension workers face various job demands, ranging from implementing field visits and assisting farmers to meeting work targets and handling problems that arise in the assisted areas. Therefore, a coordinator must not only carry out administrative functions but also build trust, provide motivation, set an example, encourage the development of subordinate skills, and create working relationships that support the achievement of organizational goals.

One leadership approach relevant to these needs is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership emphasizes leaders' ability to mobilize and develop subordinates through example, motivation, thought stimulation, and attention to individual needs. This approach is oriented not only toward task completion but also toward building subordinates' commitment, trust, motivation, and capacity so they can make a more optimal contribution to the organization.

Transformational leadership in this study is understood through four main dimensions, namely idealized influence–charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. *Idealized influence* reflects the leader's ability to become a trusted, respected role model for subordinates. *Inspirational motivation* relates to leaders' ability to build enthusiasm, motivate, and direct subordinates toward common goals. *Intellectual stimulation* reflects leaders' ability to encourage subordinates to develop knowledge and find solutions to work problems. Meanwhile, *individualized consideration* emphasizes the leader's attention to each individual's needs, ideas, expectations, and development.

This context is important at the Batanghari District Agricultural Extension Center, East Lampung Regency. The empirical results show that the Extension Coordinator not only provides work direction but also builds communication, provides motivation, helps extension workers face obstacles, and offers inspiration through their experiences and achievements. The Coordinator also carries out the mentoring function through knowledge sharing, mentoring, and evaluation of extension workers' work.

However, transformational leadership is not applied uniformly across all dimensions. In terms of individual attention, for example, an informant reported that subordinates' ideas and input are generally accepted and discussed, but under certain conditions there is still a perception that the leader has not fully appreciated the ideas conveyed by subordinates. This condition shows a dynamic between the conceptually expected transformational leadership practice and subordinates' actual experience in the organizational environment.

Studies of transformational leadership have discussed the importance of motivation, trust, example, and subordinate development in increasing organizational effectiveness. However, understanding how the four dimensions of transformational leadership are practiced in real life in the context of local-level agricultural extension organizations still requires more in-depth study. This study addresses a research gap: understanding transformational leadership not only as a set of leadership characteristics, but as a leadership practice experienced and interpreted directly by extension workers and organizational members in daily work activities.

Thus, this study aims to analyze the application of the transformational leadership style of the Extension Coordinator at the Agricultural Extension Center of Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency based on the dimensions of idealized influence–charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership practices in agricultural extension organizations and to serve as a basis for strengthening leadership models that build motivation, trust, capacity, and extension workers' involvement in achieving organizational goals.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to analyze the application of the transformational leadership style of the Extension Coordinator (Korluh) at

the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) of Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency. A qualitative approach is used because the research focuses on an in-depth understanding of leadership behavior, subordinate experiences, and leadership practices within the agricultural extension organization.

Research Locations and Informants

The research was carried out at the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) of Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency. The research informants consisted of eight people directly involved in organizational activities and who interacted with the Extension Coordinator. The informants were selected purposively based on their ability to provide information relevant to the research focus.

Research Focus

The focus of the research refers to the four dimensions of transformational leadership, namely: (1) idealized influence–charisma, which includes charisma, integrity, exemplary, and the ability to build trust; (2) inspirational motivation, which includes the ability to motivate, set work standards, provide inspiration, and direct subordinates in solving problems; (3) intellectual stimulation, which is the ability of leaders to encourage the development of knowledge, problem-solving, guidance, and mentoring subordinates; and (4) individualized consideration, which includes respect for subordinates' ideas, respect for subordinates, and concern for individual needs, expectations, and development.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected mainly through in-depth interviews with informants. Interviews were conducted using interview guidelines prepared based on transformational leadership indicators. Questions aimed to obtain information about informants' experiences and perceptions of Korluh's leadership behavior, including the ability to build trust, provide motivation and inspiration, guide problem-solving, appreciate ideas, and attend to subordinates' needs.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed qualitatively through organizing and grouping interview results by themes aligned with the four dimensions of transformational leadership. Analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. In the reduction stage, information from the interview results was selected and grouped based on the research focus. Furthermore, the data were presented narratively by integrating the informant's

statements with the concept of transformational leadership. The final stage involved interpreting the patterns of findings to provide an overview of the Extension Coordinator's application of transformational leadership.

Data Validity

The validity of the data is carried out through source triangulation, which is comparing information obtained from various informants regarding the leadership behavior of the Extension Coordinator. Consistency and differences of views between informants are used to strengthen the interpretation of the research findings and reduce subjectivity in the analysis. With this procedure, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the transformational leadership practices of the Extension Coordinator at the Agricultural Extension Center of Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency.

DISCUSSION

According to Senny (2018) Transformational leadership has 4 indicators: idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, *and individualized consideration*.

Idealized Influence – charisma

A charismatic leader creates an atmosphere of motivation based on commitment and emotional identity through their vision, philosophy, and style, which is reflected in their subordinates. Charisma is considered a combination of charm and personal appeal that contributes to the extraordinary ability to make others support the vision and promote it passionately. A charismatic leader in this case will provide insight and awareness of the mission, arouse pride, and foster an attitude of respect and trust in his subordinates. The following is an explanation of some of the indicators related to a charismatic leader:

Korluh Is Able to Show a Charismatic Leader

According to the results of interviews the author conducted with eight informants, the following data or information was obtained about Korluh's ability to show the attitude of a charismatic leader. The answers from the second informant are as follows:

"The charisma possessed by Korluh can be seen from the way he leads us. He builds good communication and has a strong spirit and determination to make the Batanghari District BPP a superior BPP. "

The second informant stated that the extension coordinator at the Batanghari District Agricultural Extension Center, East Lampung Regency, showed a charismatic attitude. This

was evident in how he led the Batanghari District Agricultural Extension Center. His good *public speaking* skills and ability to arouse the enthusiasm of other extension workers made him look more charismatic, while the answer from the fifth informant was as follows:

"Oh yes, it's really visible (his charismatic attitude) from his bearing; he's already visible."

In addition, the charismatic attitude possessed by the korluh is evident in the way he carries himself as a leader. The korluh's experience and ability to control the *audience* make him look like a great leader.

This aligns with the concept of leadership requirements. Squirting (2022) Explaining the concept of leadership requirements must be related to three important things, one of which is authority or a charismatic attitude. A charismatic attitude is an advantage, superiority, or virtue for a leader because by having this attitude, a leader will be able to manage others (his subordinates), and the person who is regulated (subordinate) can obey the leader and is willing to carry out certain orders.

Korluh is able to show a trustworthy attitude

According to the results of interviews the author conducted with eight informants, the following data or information was obtained about the correspondents' ability to show a trustworthy attitude. The following are the answers from the fourth informant:

"So in our office there is no treasurer, so the financial matters are directly held by the Korluh, and all this time Korluh has always been entrusted with holding the money. Once upon a time, our BPP received money assistance, and the money was given directly to him. We can just pretend we don't know, but he is alhamdulillah; he was trusted to directly buy office needs using the money."

The trustworthy attitude of the korluh is reflected in the honesty of the korluh in managing office finances because the Batanghari District Agricultural Extension Center does not have a special treasurer, so the assistance is directly held by the korluh, and in practice, the korluh manages the money well. An example is spending money on office needs, while the answer from the fifth informant is as follows:

"He can be said to be a leader who is very responsible for his work, ma'am. He always completes his tasks well and on time as well. Anyway, he is very disciplined, so from there he is considered trustworthy in terms of managing tasks or others."

The trustworthy korluh's attitude can also be seen in how the korluh works or leads. The korluh is always responsible for his tasks and is disciplined in completing them on time, so he is considered trustworthy in his work.

According to Bass (1994), a transformational leader must build trust in subordinates so they produce maximum work results. Trust in the leader is described as subordinates' trust in the leader, based on the belief that the leader is competent and has integrity, consistency, loyalty, and communication skills.

Trust in leaders can also be described as a leader-subordinate relationship based on mutual respect, cooperation, commitment, reliability, and equality. Basically, leaders and subordinates create a mutually beneficial relationship. When subordinates trust leaders, they are willing to support the leader's actions and are confident that their rights and interests will not be abused. When leaders have the team's trust, the agency's expectations can be met. Creativity, innovation, productivity, efficiency, and morale will flourish. Leadership based on trust is essential for collaboration, innovation, employee commitment, and a healthy work environment.

Conversely, if a subordinate does not trust the leader, it will lead to rejection, apathy, and, ultimately, failure. Studies show that trust in the leader affects subordinate behavior. When trust is broken, it can seriously harm the performance of the team or organization. Therefore, it is very important for leaders to build trust with their subordinates.

Inspirational Motivation (Motivasi Inspiratif)

Inspirational motivation describes a leader who is passionate about communicating the organization's ideal future to spur the spirit of subordinates. Leaders motivate subordinates to understand the importance of the same vision and mission. This similarity of vision spurs subordinates to work together to achieve long-term goals with optimism. This way, leaders not only arouse individual enthusiasm but also team spirit. The following is an explanation related to the inspirational motivation that Korluh gives to his subordinates:

Korluh Provides Motivation and Sets Work Standards

According to interviews the author conducted with eight informants, the following data and information were obtained about the motivation Korluh gives to the extension workers. The following is the answer from the first informant:

"He motivates by giving punishment and rewards, because from there we will be more motivated not to get punished and if we can get rewards. For the work standard, it already exists from the center, so he just follows that."

To increase the work productivity of the extension workers, Korluh provides motivation through punishment and Reward. Punishment is given as a warning not to prioritize the target area if there is government assistance, and the reward is prioritizing the target area (wilbin) for extension workers who excel when assistance is provided. The answer from the third informant is as follows:

"The form of motivation given by Korluh to us is usually just sentences of encouragement. One of them is like "make work a hobby so that it works better". For the work standards themselves, he follows the standards that have been made with the rich extension center within one month must visit the field 16 times."

The third informant stated that the motivation given by the korluh was in the form of a sentence of enthusiasm in completing the task. The sentence was uttered directly during conversations, while the korluh followed only the basic work standards set by the central government.

Hakimi (2020) Explaining that in order for an agency to be able to operate effectively, a leader must have two main functions, namely: task-oriented or problem-solving functions and group maintenance functions or social functions. In the group maintenance, or social, function, a leader must be able to set work standards so subordinates work in accordance with the goals to be achieved. In addition, a leader in this case, a korluh, must also be able to motivate his subordinates so they become more enthusiastic about their work.

Korluh is able to provide inspiration in solving problems

According to the results of interviews that the author has conducted with eight informants, the following data or information was obtained about the ability of the correlation to provide inspiration in solving problems. The following is the answer from the first informant: *"Korluh is an exemplary extension worker. He was once sent to Pattaya to represent Indonesia to take part in training. So he is very capable of inspiring us through his achievements and knowledge."*

According to the first informant, Korluh was able to inspire others in solving problems because he was an exemplary extension worker who was sent directly to Pattaya, Thailand, to

take part in training as the best agricultural extension worker. So from the training, he gained a lot of knowledge and experience that was able to inspire him to solve problems, while the answer from the fifth informant was:

"Oh yes, if that's it, he will tell us about the struggles of the previous extension workers, then compare them with the current ones so that it makes us think. Yes, every trip has challenges, so it inspires us to solve the problems that exist. "

According to the informant, the fifth way to inspire problem-solving is to tell stories about the struggles of extension workers in the past, then compare them with the current situation, which inspires extension workers to think about solving the problems they are facing.

A leader must be able to inspire people to solve problems. Stogdill, in his book *Personal Factors Associated With Leadership*, quoted (Scott, 2022) about leadership, stating that leadership must have several advantages, one of which is through achievements or *achievement*. Achievements or *achievement include* aspects of a bachelor's degree or science. This helps leaders solve problems and find solutions, and it also inspires subordinates to be more enthusiastic about their work.

Korluh Can Provide Clarity and Understanding Regarding Tasks, Provide Solutions, and Establish Organizational Decisions

According to interview results from eight informants, the following data and information were obtained about Korluh's clarity in explaining tasks, providing an understanding, making decisions, and offering solutions. The following is the answer from the first informant:

"The main task of extension workers has been determined by the center, so Korluh only explains about the weekly tasks that we have to complete. If we have problems completing the task, Korluh will help find a way out, and he is good at making decisions. "

According to the first informant, regarding understanding and clarity related to the main task as stated in Law No. 16 of 2006, the korluh no longer explains it in detail because the korluh thinks the extension worker already understands it. However, for weekly tasks or new tasks that must be carried out every week, the korluh explains clearly, either through social media such as *WhatsApp* or by meeting in person. If the extension worker experiences problems with this task, the korluh will try to find a solution and, if he determines that his decision is

good, involve the extension worker in it. The answer from the seventh informant who is an admin at BPP Batanghari District, is as follows:

"He explained his duties directly; if there were obstacles later, he would ask others to help, and if he wanted to make a decision, he always considered it carefully. "

According to the informant, the seventh korluh can provide clarity related to the task well, namely by explaining it directly; then, if there is something that is not understood, it can be asked directly, and a solution can be provided if there are difficulties or obstacles, and the korluh is able to determine organizational decisions properly.

An extension coordinator as a leader is responsible for coordinating, giving instructions and direction to each of his subordinates in carrying out their duties. It is also related to the functions of planning, initiating, controlling, supporting, informing, and evaluating a leader according to Suwatno (2019).

Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation describes a leader's ability to encourage subordinates to solve old problems in new ways. The leader seeks to encourage subordinates' attention and awareness of the problems they face. The leader then tries to develop subordinates' ability to solve problems with new approaches or perspectives. The following is an explanation related to the indicators of intellectual stimulation given by Korluh to his subordinates:

Korluh Plays the Role of a Mentor

According to the results of interviews that the author has conducted with eight informants, the following data or information was obtained about the correspondents who acted as mentors. The following are the answers from the sixth informant:

"Korluh usually shares with us the knowledge or experience he has, and he also provides assistance to us. "

According to the sixth informant, the role of Korluh as a leader as well as a mentor is shown by sharing the knowledge he has. Usually, the form of sharing is by having regular conversations or telling stories. In addition, Korluh also provides assistance to extension workers, while according to the informant, the three answers are as follows:

"He has always been actively conducting evaluations with the aim of monitoring and providing guidance to us."

Korluh's role as a mentor is also shown through evaluation activities to monitor the work of extension workers, which are carried out every Monday. On Monday, Korluh asks questions about obstacles or difficulties each extension worker experienced, and when anyone has difficulties, Korluh accompanies them and provides a solution.

The mentor role is very important. As a mentor, the korluh can give direction to his subordinates. The korluh helps subordinates become more organized, disciplined, and productive in their work. In addition, the korluh is a valuable source of inspiration and motivation for subordinates.

Individualized consideration (Perhatian Individual)

Individualized attention describes how the leader pays attention to subordinates, treats them individually, and trains and advises them. The leader invites subordinates to be observant and to see others' abilities. The leader focuses on the subordinates to develop personal strengths. The following is an explanation related to the indicators of individual attention given by the subordinate to their subordinates, namely:

Korluh Can Appreciate Ideas From Subordinates

According to the results of interviews the author conducted with eight informants, the following data or information was obtained about the ability of the korluh to appreciate the ideas of the extension workers. The following is the answer from the second informant:

"Yes, Korluh appreciates the ideas of his subordinates. For example, if the extension worker gives ideas or suggestions, the ideas are accommodated and continue to be discussed together"

The form of appreciating Korluh for the ideas given by the extension worker, namely Korluh accommodates all the ideas given to him, then he will discuss it with others to get the best answer, while the answer from the fourth informant is as follows:

"In my opinion, sometimes Korluh still can't appreciate the ideas of his employees, yes, Mbak, because he feels he knows best. That's what I think."

According to the fourth informant, Korluh sometimes cannot appreciate the ideas of his subordinates, especially extension workers, because Korluh feels that he already has a lot of knowledge, so he understands everything best.

Based on data or information, Korluh can appreciate the ideas of his extension workers. Korluh is open and accepts input/ideas given by subordinates which are then discussed together

to get the best answer. But sometimes Korluh also cannot appreciate the ideas of his extension workers because they feel they are the most able and most understanding.

As a result of the interview with the Korluh BPP Batanghari, East Lampung, he rarely receives input or ideas from subordinates. When he does not receive ideas or input from subordinates, he conveys his reasons well.

Korluh Is Able to Respect Subordinates

According to interviews the author conducted with eight informants, the following data or information was obtained about how Korluh respects extension workers or their subordinates. The following is the answer from the first informant:

"For example, if there is an official who wants to visit one of my fostered areas (wilbin), he will let me know first as the person in charge of the wilbin as a form of respect for him. "

According to the first informant, to respect extension workers or their subordinates, report to the extension worker responsible for the assisted area that the service will visit by contacting him via WhatsApp or speaking with him directly when meeting. So the korluh still respects the extension worker even though he holds a higher position, while the answer from the eighth informant, who is a *Housekeeping or Office Boy*, is as follows:

"He never differentiated between extension workers and housekeeping. Yes, even though I am only here as housekeeping, he never treats me differently from other extension workers. If there is a meal, I am invited to eat in the same place; if I talk, I talk together."

According to the eighth informant, a *House Keeping/Office Boy* is a form of respect for his subordinates, namely by not discriminating against himself from other extension workers. Korluh also does not treat them differently, even though their positions are different. Then the Korluh of BPP Batanghari, East Lampung stated that:

"Yes, I don't want to differentiate between my subordinates. I consider everything the same. Whether it's extension workers, admins, or HK here. Because I think we are all the same. Both deserve to be respected. Whether old or young, extension workers, admins, HK, or others. The only difference is that I am trusted here to be a korluh and be their leader. That's it. If we respect others, others will respect us too."

Based on the interview results, Korluh does not discriminate against his subordinates. According to Korluh, respecting subordinates has a positive impact on him and his work.

Korluh Has Concern for Subordinates Regarding Subordinates' Expectations and Desires

According to interviews the author conducted with eight informants, the following data and information were obtained about Korluh's concerns regarding his subordinates' expectations and desires. The answer from the first informant is:

"He is very diligent in reminding us to complete our targets so that we can move up. Because extension workers must be promoted every 2 years so that they don't get punished by the district. Now he really cares about that so that his extension workers become good extension workers."

According to the first informant, Korluh is concerned about the expectations and desires of subordinates, for example, in terms of promotion. He always reminds extension workers to meet their targets so they can be promoted, become the best extension workers, and avoid punishment from the district. The form of the reminder sentence is "Let's get promoted soon. Quickly complete the targets. If anything needs help or needs to be signed, just say it. If I can help later, I will help you." While the answer from the eighth informant is:

"He often talks to me and often asks about my hopes for the future, and he will try to help fulfill them."

According to the eighth informant, Korluh is very concerned about his subordinates' expectations and desires. One of them is a housekeeper; he always motivates, asks questions, and does not hesitate to help with any needs so that an HK/OB can also have a better job.

"In my opinion, being a leader who cares about the wishes and expectations of subordinates is important. Because an office will be more developed if we care about it. That's why, as long as I am a leader, I will continue to ask them what their expectations and desires are so that there is a positive reciprocity with the office."

This is in accordance with the statement of (Torrington *et al.*, 2008) in (Puspita, 2013) that a leader must pay attention to the welfare of his subordinates, so that their commitment to helping the achievement of organizational goals increases.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Extension Coordinator at the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) of Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency has implemented a transformational leadership style that is reflected in four dimensions, namely *idealized influence – charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and*

individualized consideration. In the idealized *influence dimension*, the Extension Coordinator shows a charismatic attitude, responsibility, discipline, and is able to build subordinate trust. In the *inspirational motivation dimension*, leaders are able to provide motivation, set work standards, provide inspiration in solving problems, and provide direction and alternative solutions to the obstacles faced by extension workers. The intellectual *stimulation dimension* is shown through the role of the leader as a mentor who shares knowledge and experience, provides assistance, and evaluates the work of extension workers. Meanwhile, the dimension of *individualized consideration* is reflected in the attitude of respecting subordinates without differentiating positions, paying attention to the expectations and needs of subordinates, and providing space for the delivery of ideas and inputs. However, there is still a perception that under certain conditions the appreciation of subordinate ideas is not fully optimal. Thus, the Extension Coordinator has applied transformational leadership in the organizational activities of the Batanghari District BPP, but openness and appreciation for subordinate ideas still need to be strengthened to create more participatory leadership and support the sustainable development of extension workers.

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