



Transformational Leadership At Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun

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Abstract

Background. This research is based on the problem of teacher and student discipline at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun, which, despite having strict rules and a clear vision, still shows low participation and awareness of intrinsic discipline.

Aims. This research aims to examine how school principals apply the four dimensions of Transformational leadership: influence, idealized-inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Methods. In fostering a culture of discipline and increasing school residents' involvement, using descriptive qualitative methods such as observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This study analyzes the leadership practices of school principals in the natural context of madrasahs.

Result. The results of the study show that examples of leadership, visionary communication, support for learning innovation, a humanistic approach, and an educational and restorative disciplinary system can create an orderly, supportive, and motivating learning environment. Transformational leadership has been shown to work in an integrated way to foster discipline as an internal value, not just formal compliance.

Conclusion. The conclusion of the research is that transformational leadership is an effective strategy to strengthen the culture of educational organizations.

Implementation. It is recommended that schools continue to develop affirming two-way communication, continuous character development, and pedagogical innovation to maintain the quality of discipline and motivation to learn.

Keywords: Leadership, transformational, discipline, motivation, madrasah



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INTRODUCTION

The success, direction, and quality of any organization, including educational institutions, are strategically determined by its leadership. Leadership in schools does not only include handling documents; Leadership also includes inspiration, motivation, and the creation of a good work environment. Four key elements are highlighted by the transformational leadership concepts of Burns (1978) and Bass & Riggio (2006): ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. These elements are effective in encouraging behavior change and improving member performance.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun is an interesting context as well as showing the gap in this research. Although the school has a clear vision, strict discipline rules, and visionary leadership, student participation remains low, including instances of sleeping in class. This condition indicates a lack of synchronization between the application of discipline rules and the development of discipline awareness among students. In other words, the compliance that occurs remains formal and has not become intrinsic motivation.

Some previous studies have shown that transformational leadership positively affects teacher discipline (Sulastri et al., 2019; Maulana, 2021) and student learning motivation (Rohman, 2018). However, most studies still discuss the two aspects separately, so studies that examine the application of the four dimensions of transformational leadership as a whole in shaping a culture of discipline, especially in religiously values-based madrasas, remain limited.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine how school principals integrate the four dimensions of transformational leadership to instill discipline, increase student involvement, and build a conducive learning environment. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable suggestions for strengthening leadership models in value-based schools and to make a conceptual contribution to the development of transformational leadership theory in Islamic education.

Transformational leadership, in particular, is essential for creating a supportive learning environment and helping teachers and students succeed in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) education. However, in practice, there are still problems in the educational atmosphere. This is a challenge to leadership effectiveness; therefore, a transformational approach is important to address this by creating a more stimulating learning atmosphere, promoting student learning concepts, and strengthening the teacher-student relationship in the learning process.

In the practice of implementing education, problems often arise when the principal's
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DOI: 10.62885/edusci.v3i2.982

leadership style is not in harmony with the school community's needs. Some leaders still use an instructional, control-oriented approach, with greater emphasis on compliance than on coaching. This kind of leadership pattern usually yields only momentary discipline and does not foster a deep awareness of it. As a result, changes in teacher and student behavior do not occur consistently because they are not accompanied by an empowerment process that builds intrinsic motivation.

In addition, another obstacle is the lack of two-way communication between the principal, teachers, and students. Some policies are still formulated top-down, so teachers feel less involved or believe the rules do not fully align with the conditions they face in the classroom. Inhumane communication by leaders contributes to low participation and a lack of learning discipline.

This situation is also evident at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun, where disorderly behavior, low student involvement, and inconsistent teacher implementation of disciplinary rules are still evident. Although madrassas have reasonable regulations, this phenomenon indicates that structure alone is not enough without the support of leadership roles that can inspire, exemplify, and coach.

In addition, social changes, technological developments, curriculum demands, and increasingly diverse student characters make the principal's task more complex. Leaders who are unable to adapt to these changes tend to have difficulty motivating teachers and creating effective learning. This shows that traditional leadership models that focus solely on administrative aspects are no longer adequate for modern education.

Given these various problems, transformational leadership is considered a relevant approach. The four dimensions offer solutions to the weaknesses of the old leadership style, especially the lack of example, limited innovation, weak communication, and the lack of intrinsic motivation strengthening. Therefore, research on the application of transformational leadership in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun is important to understand how this approach addresses existing leadership problems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, there are previous studies, including *first*, Sulastri, D., Indrawati, N., and Fadhli, M. (2019). The study's results show the influence of the school principal's Sulthon Mujahidin

transformational leadership on teacher discipline at SMA Negeri Padang City. It shows that the principal's transformational leadership has a strong influence on teacher discipline at Padang City High School. Leadership examples, open communication, and positive interpersonal relationships are the main factors in fostering disciplined behavior. These findings emphasize the importance of the idealized influence dimension, as reflected in teachers' professional commitment.

Second. Maulana, R. (2021). Stating that this research makes an important contribution in understanding transformational leadership and teacher work discipline: A study at XYZ Integrated Islamic Junior High School. Finding that the integrity and influence of the principal are ideal to build teacher work discipline in junior high school XYZ Integrated Islam. Discipline is understood not just as formal obedience, but also as moral values internalized through the vision and motivation provided by leaders. This shows the relevance of the inspirational motivation dimension in the cultural context of educational organizations.

Third. Rohman, A. (2018). The findings served as the basis for examining the influence of transformational leadership on student learning motivation at MA Darul Ulum Jombang. Principals who can inspire and clearly communicate learning objectives have been shown to increase students' intrinsic participation, interest, and motivation.

Fourth. Sari, D. (2022). This research emphasizes *restorative leadership* in building discipline in the school environment, highlighting the importance of *aligning restorative leadership* with transformational leadership. Through two-way communication, empathy, and dialogical problem-solving, leaders can foster more sustainable discipline. Discipline is no longer repressive, but rather a process of character development.

Fifth. Sutrisno. (2020). This emphasizes the implementation of transformational leadership by madrasah heads to improve the quality of education at MAN 1 Yogyakarta. The transformational leadership of madrasah heads at MAN 1 Yogyakarta significantly improves the quality of education. Through teacher empowerment, intellectual stimulation, and moral coaching, madrasah heads have created a productive, collaborative learning environment.

Sixth. Javid and Ahmad (2019). Explaining that, in schools in Pakistan, principals with a transformational style can increase teachers' work motivation, interpersonal trust, and discipline. The dimension of inspirational motivation was found to be the most dominant factor.

Seventh. Haris, Yusuf, and Salleh (2016). Found that transformational leadership has a

direct influence on improving teacher performance and school effectiveness at the secondary level in Malaysia. The dimensions of inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation were found to be the most dominant in encouraging learning innovation and improving teacher discipline.

Eighth. Yusuf and Darmawan (2020). It shows that the transformational leadership of school principals significantly affects teacher performance, work motivation, and discipline culture in Indonesian secondary schools. This study emphasizes the importance of exemplary leaders and individual attention in improving teacher professionalism.

Ninth. Rahmawati and Subekti (2023). This study examines the extent to which principals' transformational leadership influences teachers' professionalism in secondary schools. Using a quantitative approach and involving 120 teachers, the study found that the idealized influence and individualized consideration dimensions contributed the most to improving work ethic, discipline, and the quality of learning planning. Transformational leadership is considered capable of creating a supportive work climate, thereby encouraging teachers to be more responsible and innovative in their teaching practices.

Tenth. Putra and Wibowo (2022). This study examines the influence that transformational leadership has on teacher performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable. The results showed that transformational leadership styles had a direct effect on improving teacher performance, and work motivation strengthened these relationships. Principals who can provide inspiration, clear vision, and individual attention are proven to increase teachers' responsibility, discipline, and the quality of learning.

Leadership in the Context of Education

Leadership is an important element in educational management, directly affecting the direction and quality of the institution. Leadership is more than just administrative ability; it also involves inspiring, guiding, and fostering productive communication in the classroom. According to Sutarto (2018), leadership is the ability to persuade people to work together to achieve a common goal by influencing their behavior in certain situations.

Principals are seen as agents of change in the educational environment because they can create a supportive learning environment, encourage active learning, and foster an academic

culture that nurtures students' character development. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2015), the head of a formal educational institution must not only handle administrative tasks but also possess the vision and skills to foster a welcoming, flexible learning environment. The discipline of teachers and students is highly dependent on the principal's role as a leader.

Leaders who can set an example, implement a fair system of rewards and sanctions, and foster open communication will be more effective at instilling values of discipline. Discipline is not just about physical presence, but also includes moral responsibility, work ethic, and active involvement in the learning process.

The Role of the Principal as a Transformational Leader

Several previous studies have also strengthened the importance of transformational leadership in the context of education. Sulastrri et al. (2019) show that the application of transformational leadership styles in SMA Negeri Kota Padang significantly affects teacher discipline through example and open communication. Rohman (2018), in his research at MA Darul Ulum Jombang, found that the inspirational approach used by school principals directly increased students' motivation to learn. This research is relevant to the context of Madrasah Tsanawiyah, where challenges such as low student participation call for a humanistic, motivating leadership approach.

In addition, Maulana (2021) emphasized that leadership that emphasizes integrity and ideal influence significantly shapes teacher discipline within a school's organizational culture.

In the context of madrasahs, school principals have a central role as policy directors, institutional culture shapers, and drivers of change. Wahjosumidjo (in Susanto, 2016) emphasized that school principals not only carry out administrative functions, but also as moral and intellectual leaders who are required to have vision, integrity, and managerial skills.

The application of a transformational leadership style enables principals to increase teacher participation, strengthen relationships among school residents, and foster a supportive and inspiring learning environment. At Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun, this leadership style has the potential to improve discipline and the quality of learning. Problems such as low student participation in the classroom can be addressed through a reflective and humanistic approach, as described in Bass and Avolio's theories.

Synthesis of theory and relevance to research

From the literature review above, it is evident that transformational leadership theory is closely related to the development of a positive work culture and increased discipline in schools. The four dimensions in Bass and Riggio's model provide a solid conceptual framework for examining principals' behavior, especially in building interpersonal communication and creating a learning environment that supports learners' growth.

This study adopts transformational leadership theory as the primary basis for analyzing the role of Tsanawiyah Principal Ma'had Al-Zaytun in motivating teachers and students and shaping discipline. This theory is considered relevant and applicable to addressing various challenges in value-based and character-based education.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine how principals' transformational leadership affects teacher and student discipline. This method was chosen because it can explore subjective experiences and social dynamics in the school environment. The study focuses on the four dimensions of transformational leadership, as defined by Bass and Riggio (2006), and their relationship with the disciplined behavior of school residents.

The research is being conducted at MTs Ma'had Al-Zaytun, which was chosen purposively for its visionary leadership and disciplined culture. Informants include the principal as the main character, as well as teachers and students as supporters.

Data collection was conducted through observation, semi-structured interviews, and the tracing of documents such as discipline policies and attendance records. The research variables include transformational leadership and work discipline, operationalized through coaching, communication, exemplary behavior, reward, and punishment indicators.

The data's validity is strengthened by triangulation and member checks. The analysis uses the Miles and Huberman steps, which consist of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. This research provides a brief overview of how transformational leadership fosters a culture of discipline in madrasas.

Results of analysis and discussion

The purpose of this research is to outline how the transformational leadership of principals at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun is used to improve the discipline of teachers and students. Principals consistently use the four dimensions of transformational leadership of ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration as defined by Bass and Riggio (2006), based on observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The application of these four elements greatly helps foster a culture of discipline in the educational environment.

Idealized Influence

The principal demonstrates integrity and strong, exemplary leadership in carrying out their duties, reflected in consistent attendance, punctual timekeeping, and a commitment to professionalism. This example not only reinforces his leadership's legitimacy but also creates a psychological effect on teachers and students to follow high standards of behavior. The results of interviews with teachers show that the principal's earlier presence among teachers exerts constructive moral pressure on all school residents to improve personal discipline. This finding supports Sutrisno's (2017) view that the example of leaders is an essential aspect in the formation of work discipline.

Inspirational Motivation

The principal actively builds a collective spirit through clear communication of vision and the delivery of motivational messages across various school forums. In each briefing, the principal emphasized the importance of collaboration and achieving educational targets together. This fosters a sense of belonging to the institution's vision and increases teachers' and students' emotional involvement in the learning process. This approach aligns with the concept of inspirational motivation in transformational leadership, in which the leader not only directs but also arouses the enthusiasm and optimism of his followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Intellectual Stimulation

Leaders provide ample space for teachers to innovate in teaching and classroom management. Teachers are encouraged to develop interactive, responsive learning methods that

align with classroom dynamics. The principal also encourages teachers to think critically when responding to student problems, including low participation or boredom in the learning process. This policy shows that intellectual stimulation not only improves the quality of learning but also helps overcome students' passive behavior, such as falling asleep in class, through a more contextual and engaging learning approach.

The principal shows sensitivity to the individual needs of school residents, both teachers and students. Personal support, attention to psychological conditions, and providing opportunities for self-development are part of the leadership strategy implemented. Teachers feel heard and valued, while students feel a humanistic and inclusive approach. This dimension contributes to the creation of a harmonious school climate and supports the formation of discipline by internalizing values rather than relying solely on external pressures.

The results of this study show that the principal of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun consistently applies a transformational leadership style through six key practices, which align with the Bass and Riggio (2006) model.

Each of these practices contributes directly to the formation of a strong discipline culture and increased participation of school citizens in the educational process.

1. Internalizing the School's Vision and Mission

The principal demonstrates the ability to internalize the school's vision and mission through a range of symbolic and practical strategies. Daily activities such as morning yells, strengthening an orderly and fun work culture, and forums such as apples, briefings, and Sunday trainings are used as spaces for conveying values and institutional direction. This process forms a collective consciousness that strengthens teacher and student commitment to a common goal.

This approach reflects inspirational motivation in transformational leadership theory, where leaders build a vision that motivates and unifies the direction of the organization's movement (Bass & Riggio, 2006)

2. Collaborative and Inspirational Leadership

The principal not only performs administrative functions but also builds functional and moral relationships with school residents. He encourages learning innovations such as *lesson study*, *project-based learning*, and the use of online learning spaces. Support for innovation is provided through facilities, training, and recognition of teacher and student initiatives. Through formal forums such as apples and briefings, school principals routinely convey motivation and

give symbolic awards that strengthen the spirit and sense of belonging.

This practice demonstrates the dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, in which leaders serve as role models and sources of inspiration, fostering confidence and collaboration (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

3. Exemplary and Integrity of School Principals

The principal's personal integrity is the foundation for the formation of a discipline culture. His consistent presence, hard work despite poor health, and openness in decision-making set a real example. Principals also involve teachers and students in the policy formulation process through discussion and analysis of situations, which demonstrates participatory and democratic leadership.

This practice reflects the dimensions of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, in which leaders attend to individual needs and encourage active participation in decision-making.

4. Open and Humanistic Communication Culture

The principal creates an open and empathetic communication climate through formal and informal forums, including weekly discussions, peer training, and free dialogue in his room. This culture allows students and teachers to convey problems and ideas directly, without fear or pressure. This strategy supports the formation of an equal relationship between leaders and school residents.

This approach aligns with the principles of restorative leadership and the student-centered approach, in which leaders act as facilitators who support individual growth rather than simply institutional controllers.

5. Educational and Restorative Discipline

The discipline system applied is educational, fair, and non-repressive. Sanctions are delivered through a dialogical and empathetic approach, not through physical punishment or stigmatization. Discipline evaluations are conducted periodically in a family atmosphere that encourages reflection and personal accountability.

This model reflects the principle of restorative justice, which prioritizes fostering and restoring social relationships rather than a punitive approach. This strengthens the principal's role as a transformative leader who shapes the character of school citizens through a humanistic approach.

6. Leadership That Humanizes and Responds to Individual Needs

The principal shows sensitivity to the personal challenges faced by teachers and students. Schedule flexibility, facility support, and provision of expression space are tailored to each individual's needs. Teachers with time constraints are given assignment adjustments, while students who show learning difficulties are given emotional and academic support.

The findings in this study are consistent with previous studies. For example, Sari (2022) emphasizes the importance of restorative approaches and two-way communication in building school-community discipline, in line with the principal's practice at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun, which prioritizes empathy, dialogue, and participation.

However, compared to Rohman's (2018) study, which emphasizes student motivation, this study shows that the dimensions of ideal influence and the principal's personal example also play a significant role in encouraging awareness of discipline among both students and teachers. Thus, the contribution of this research lies in affirming that the four dimensions of transformational leadership work in an integrated and complementary manner to form a healthy educational organizational culture.

This approach reflects the implementation of the individualized consideration dimension, which is a key element in building school community involvement and loyalty to the shared vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Synthesis of Findings

The transformational leadership of the principal at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun is a strategic tool in creating a culture of discipline, motivation, and positive interpersonal relationships in the educational environment. This is evident from the six practices mentioned earlier. Leadership based on values, participation, and humanization has been proven to foster internal discipline awareness, not through coercion or punishment alone.

These findings reinforce the relevance of Bass and Riggio's theory in Indonesian education, especially in madrassas with a religious character and a cohesive community. The practical implications call for the development of educational leadership that emphasizes moral values, two-way communication, and sustainable character-building strategies.

CONCLUSION

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DOI: 10.62885/edusci.v3i2.982

According to this study, the implementation of transformational leadership by the head of MTS Ma'had Al-Zaytun greatly improves the school environment by fostering a culture of discipline and improving the quality of teacher and student involvement. Principals can act as role models, motivators, innovation facilitators, and humanist mentors by applying the four main aspects of transformational leadership: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

In addition to serving as an administrative manager, the principal is a moral leader who encourages honest communication, strengthens group commitment, and fosters a friendly, motivating work environment. Practices such as internalization of vision-mission, collaborative leadership, exemplary integrity, open communication, restorative disciplinary approaches, and responsiveness to individual needs have proven effective in building discipline as internally-embedded values, rather than merely the result of structural coercion.

These findings underscore the relevance of Bass and Riggio's theory in the context of Indonesian education, especially in madrassas based on religious values and characters. Thus, transformational leadership is a strategic approach in overcoming various educational challenges, including low student participation, weak motivation to learn, and the need for character formation through example and healthy interpersonal relationships.

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