

The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Teacher Performance in Coping with High Workloads at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh

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Abstract

Transformational leadership has become an important issue in educational management, particularly in relation to teacher performance amid increasing professional demands and workload pressures. However, research specifically examining the role of transformational leadership in supporting teacher performance under high-workload conditions in public senior high schools remains limited. This study aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership style on teacher performance in coping with high workloads at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. A quantitative approach was employed using an explanatory survey design. The study involved 71 teachers selected through total sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires, observation, and documentation and analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality and linearity tests, and simple linear regression with SPSS. The findings indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, as shown by a significance value of 0.000 and an R Square value of 0.141. This result indicates that transformational leadership explains 14.1% of the variance in teacher performance, while the remaining 85.9% is influenced by other factors.

This study concludes that transformational leadership plays a meaningful role in strengthening teacher performance under high-workload conditions, although its contribution is relatively limited compared with other potential determinants. Theoretically, this study contributes to educational leadership literature by extending understanding of how principal leadership supports teacher performance in demanding school contexts. Practically, the findings imply that school principals should strengthen transformational leadership practices through clear vision building, professional support, innovation encouragement, and individualized attention to improve teacher performance in public senior high schools.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Teacher Performance; Teacher Workload; Principal Leadership; Educational Management

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in developing human resources, particularly in preparing individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and adaptability needed to respond to social and technological change. Across many countries, the quality of education is closely linked to the quality of teachers and the capacity of schools to support teachers' professional work. Global reports have increasingly highlighted that teachers are facing heavier responsibilities, more complex classroom demands, administrative pressure, and the need to continuously adjust to curriculum and policy changes (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2024). These conditions indicate that teacher performance is not merely an individual matter, but also an organizational issue that requires strong leadership and a supportive school environment.

In Indonesia, teachers are expected to carry out various professional responsibilities, including lesson planning, classroom instruction, student assessment, learning evaluation, administrative reporting, and participation in school development programs. These responsibilities are also connected to the national standards of teacher competence, which cover pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. However, the increasing complexity of teachers' work has created new challenges in maintaining consistent performance. Mulyasa (2013) explains that teacher performance can be seen from the teacher's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning activities. Similarly, Mukhlisin et al. (2023) states that teacher performance reflects the extent to which teachers are able to fulfil their professional duties in accordance with educational standards.

Teacher workload is one of the important issues affecting professional performance. High workload may reduce teachers' time and energy for developing creative learning strategies, updating teaching materials, and using innovative instructional media. From an organizational perspective, employee performance is influenced not only by individual competence, but also by work environment, leadership, motivation, and institutional support (Setyorini et al., 2022; Wirawan, 2009). Therefore, teacher performance should be examined in relation to the organizational conditions in which teachers work. A school with strong managerial support may help teachers maintain their performance, even when they face demanding workloads.

The principal has a strategic role in creating such support. As the leader of the school, the principal is responsible for guiding teachers, building a shared vision, encouraging collaboration, and creating a positive professional climate. Leadership becomes especially important when teachers are required to work under pressure. Robbins & Judge (2019) argue that leadership influences the behaviour of organizational members in achieving common goals. In schools, this means that the principal's leadership style can shape teachers' motivation, commitment, and work effectiveness. One leadership style that is highly relevant in this context is transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach that inspires members of an organization to work beyond routine obligations and to develop a stronger commitment to shared goals. Burns (1978) introduced transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Haetami et al. (2023) later developed this concept into four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Bass (1985) emphasize that transformational leaders motivate followers through vision, trust, personal attention, and intellectual encouragement. In the school context, a transformational principal is expected to become a role model, communicate school goals clearly, support teachers personally, and encourage innovation in teaching practices.

Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership is related to teacher performance. Leithwood & Jantzi (2005) found that transformational school leadership contributes to a collaborative work culture and strengthens teachers' commitment. Podsakoff et al. (1990) also reported that transformational leadership improves positive work

behaviour through trust, loyalty, and motivation. In the Indonesian educational context, Hardono et al. (2017) found that principal leadership had a significant effect on teacher performance. More recent studies also support this relationship. Mariatie (2022) Septiani & Wahyuni (2023) , Achi (2025) , Tian & Guo (2024) indicate that transformational leadership can improve teacher motivation, job satisfaction, work effectiveness, and resilience in facing professional pressure.

Although many studies have examined transformational leadership and teacher performance, several gaps remain. Most previous studies have focused on the direct relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance in general school settings. Fewer studies have specifically examined this relationship in the context of high teacher workload. This gap is important because workload may influence how teachers respond to leadership support, motivation, and guidance. Jex (1998); Spector (2003) explain that excessive workload can become a work stressor when it is not properly managed. Kyriacou (2001) also states that teacher stress may reduce the quality of teaching when teachers do not receive adequate organizational support. Thus, it is necessary to examine transformational leadership not only as a general leadership variable, but also as a factor that may help teachers maintain performance under high workload conditions.

This issue is also relevant to SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. Based on preliminary observations and informal interviews conducted from September to December 2025, several teachers reported that they faced considerable work demands, particularly in preparing teaching documents, completing administrative reports, conducting student assessment, and adapting to curriculum changes. Some teachers showed strong performance through their involvement in school activities and their commitment to classroom learning. However, several challenges were still found, such as teaching documents that had not been fully updated, limited variation in teaching methods, and uneven use of technology-based learning media. These findings suggest that teacher performance at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh still needs to be strengthened, especially in responding to the demands of modern learning.

Preliminary findings also indicate that the principal of SMAN 1 Payakumbuh is perceived to apply transformational leadership practices. The principal communicates the school vision, provides direction, encourages teachers to improve their teaching practices, and offers support when teachers face increasing work demands. Nevertheless, the presence of high workload makes it important to investigate whether transformational leadership has

a significant influence on teacher performance. This study therefore focuses on the effect of transformational leadership style on teacher performance in facing high workload at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational management studies, particularly in understanding how school leadership can support teacher performance in demanding work situations.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach because the research aimed to examine the effect of transformational leadership style on teacher performance through numerical data and statistical analysis. Quantitative research is appropriate when the researcher intends to test hypotheses, measure relationships among variables, and analyze data objectively using statistical procedures (Sugiyono, 2019). The research used an explanatory survey design, as it sought to explain the influence of the independent variable, namely transformational leadership style, on the dependent variable, namely teacher performance. This design was considered suitable because the study focused on testing the direct relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance in the context of high workload at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. The transformational leadership variable was based on the dimensions proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994), including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Meanwhile, teacher performance was examined through aspects related to work quality, punctuality, initiative, work ability, and communication.

The population of this study consisted of all teachers at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh, with a total of 71 teachers. Since the population was fewer than 100, the entire population was used as the research sample through a total sampling technique. This sampling technique was selected to obtain more complete and representative data from all teachers in the school. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The transformational leadership scale consisted of 25 items adapted from Bass and Avolio’s theory and the instrument developed by Al Aqib (2024). The teacher performance scale consisted of 27 items adapted from Uno and Lamatenggo’s theory and redeveloped by (Irshad et al., 2023). In addition to questionnaires, observation and documentation were used to support the data collection process. Observation was conducted to obtain an initial description of school conditions, leadership

practices, and teacher work activities, while documentation was used to collect supporting data such as teacher lists, school organizational structure, and relevant school records.

Before being used in the study, the instruments were examined in terms of validity, reliability, and item discrimination. The transformational leadership scale showed item validity coefficients ranging from 0.545 to 0.914, while the teacher performance scale showed item validity coefficients ranging from 0.570 to 0.877. The reliability test showed that both instruments had very high internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.974 for the transformational leadership scale and 0.973 for the teacher performance scale. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS through several stages. First, descriptive statistical analysis was used to categorize the level of transformational leadership and teacher performance based on hypothetical mean and standard deviation. Second, normality and linearity tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions for parametric analysis. Finally, simple linear regression was used to test the research hypothesis and determine the extent to which transformational leadership style influenced teacher performance in facing high workload at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. The effect was considered statistically significant when the significance value was lower than 0.05.

RESULTS

1. Classical Assumption Test

The first stage of data analysis was conducted by testing the classical assumptions, namely normality and linearity tests. These tests were carried out to ensure that the data met the requirements for simple linear regression analysis. The result of the normality test is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Normality Test Result

Variables	N	SD	Mean	Sig.	Description
Transformational Leadership Style and Teacher Performance	71	8.1208	0.000	0.493	Normal

Based on Table 1, the normality test showed a significance value of 0.493. Since the significance value was higher than 0.05, the data were normally distributed. This result indicates that the assumption of normality was fulfilled, and the data were appropriate for further analysis using simple linear regression.

The linearity test was then conducted to determine whether transformational leadership style and teacher performance had a linear relationship. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Linearity Test Result

Variables	Linearity Sig.	Deviation from Linearity Sig.	Description
Transformational Leadership Style and Teacher Performance	0.000	0.784	Linear

Table 2 shows that the significance value of linearity was 0.000, which was lower than 0.05. This indicates that there was a linear relationship between transformational leadership style and teacher performance. In addition, the significance value of deviation from linearity was 0.784, which was higher than 0.05. This means that there was no significant deviation from the linear pattern. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables was considered linear, and the regression analysis could be continued.

2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the effect of transformational leadership style on teacher performance. The regression equation result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Equation Test Result

Model	B	t	Sig.
Constant	39.412	3.272	0.000
Transformational Leadership	0.558	3.528	0.000

Based on Table 3, the constant value was 39.412, while the regression coefficient of transformational leadership was 0.558 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The positive regression coefficient indicates that the higher the transformational leadership style applied by the principal, the higher the teacher performance.

The regression equation can be written as follows:

$$Y = 39.412 + 0.558X \quad (1)$$

In this equation, Y represents teacher performance, while X represents transformational leadership style. The equation shows that every one-unit increase in transformational leadership style increases teacher performance by 0.558 units.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Result

Variable	B	t	Sig.	R Square	Description
Transformational Leadership Style → Teacher Performance	0.558	3.528	0.000	0.141	Ha accepted

Table 4 shows that the significance value was 0.000, which was lower than 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that transformational leadership style had a significant effect on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. The R Square value of 0.141 indicates that transformational leadership style contributed 14.1% to teacher performance, while the remaining 85.9% was influenced by other factors outside the variable examined in this study.

3. Item Discrimination Analysis

Item discrimination analysis was conducted to determine the ability of each item to distinguish respondents based on the level of the measured variable. The result is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Item Discrimination Value

Variable	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Transformational Leadership Style	0.456–0.806
Teacher Performance	0.361–0.646

Based on Table 5, the corrected item-total correlation values for the transformational leadership style variable ranged from 0.456 to 0.806. Meanwhile, the corrected item-total correlation values for the teacher performance variable ranged from 0.361 to 0.646. All items had correlation values above 0.30, indicating that they had good item discrimination. Therefore, all items were considered valid in distinguishing respondents according to the level of each measured variable and were appropriate for use in this study.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. The regression analysis revealed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the proposed hypothesis was accepted. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.141$) indicates that transformational leadership contributed 14.1% to teacher performance, while the remaining 85.9% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study. These findings suggest that although teacher performance is a multidimensional construct, the leadership style adopted by the principal remains an important organizational factor that can

shape teachers' attitudes and work behaviour. This result supports the view of Haetami et al. (2023) that transformational leaders can improve followers' motivation, commitment, and performance by inspiring them to exceed their personal interests and work toward organizational goals.

The positive influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance can be explained by the nature of school organizations. Teachers currently face increasing responsibilities, including classroom instruction, lesson planning, assessment activities, administrative reporting, curriculum adaptation, and the integration of technology into teaching practices. Such demands often create high workloads and professional pressure. Under these circumstances, supportive and inspirational leadership becomes crucial for maintaining teacher effectiveness. Ryan et al. (2022) argues that transformational leadership is particularly effective in educational organizations because it creates a positive work climate, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and enhances employee engagement. Therefore, principals who provide vision, support, and encouragement may help teachers remain productive despite increasing work demands.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study are consistent with the transformational leadership theory developed by Burns (1978) and later refined by (Bass, 1985). According to this theory, transformational leaders influence followers by transforming their values, beliefs, and attitudes so that they are willing to perform beyond formal expectations. Bass and Riggio (2006) further explain that transformational leadership consists of four dimensions, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The present findings indicate that these dimensions collectively contribute to improving teacher performance, particularly in situations characterized by high workload and organizational pressure.

The first dimension, idealized influence, may explain why transformational leadership positively affects teacher performance. Principals who demonstrate integrity, discipline, responsibility, and commitment tend to gain the trust and respect of teachers. Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn appropriate behaviour by observing role models within their environment (Bandura, 1986). Consequently, teachers are more likely to emulate principals who consistently demonstrate professional behaviour and dedication to school goals. Similar findings were reported by Murni (2021), who found that principal role modelling significantly influenced teachers' work discipline and professional commitment.

The second dimension, inspirational motivation, is also relevant to understanding the findings of this study. Principals who communicate clear visions and organizational goals can foster optimism and strengthen teachers' commitment to their work. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), inspirational motivation encourages followers to perceive their work as meaningful and valuable. In educational settings, teachers who understand and share the school's vision are more likely to demonstrate greater responsibility and persistence in performing their duties. Harsoyo (2022) reported that motivational leadership practices increased teachers' engagement and willingness to undertake additional responsibilities, even under demanding working conditions.

The third dimension, intellectual stimulation, encourages teachers to think creatively and develop innovative solutions to educational challenges. Modern educational systems require teachers to continuously adapt to technological developments, curriculum reforms, and students' diverse learning needs. Principals who encourage experimentation and provide opportunities for professional growth may strengthen teachers' confidence and instructional competence. This finding is in line with the work of Siburian (2015), who concluded that intellectual stimulation from school leaders significantly contributed to teachers' professional development and instructional innovation.

The fourth dimension, individualized consideration, also plays a significant role in teacher performance. This dimension refers to the leader's ability to recognize individual needs and provide personal support and guidance. Teachers who feel appreciated and supported by their principals tend to develop stronger job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Damanik and Dewi (2024) found that principals' personal support and mentoring significantly enhanced teacher motivation and work performance. In the context of SMAN 1 Payakumbuh, individualized support may be particularly important because teachers have different professional needs and face varying levels of workload and work-related stress.

The findings of this study are also consistent with several previous empirical studies. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) reported that transformational leadership positively influenced teacher commitment and school effectiveness through the development of collaborative cultures. Podsakoff et al. (1990) demonstrated that transformational leadership enhanced organizational performance by improving employee trust, motivation, and extra-role behaviour. In Indonesia, Hardono et al. (2017) found that principal leadership significantly

influenced teacher performance through the creation of a supportive organizational climate. Similar findings were reported by Mariatie et al. (2022), who concluded that transformational leadership positively affected teacher performance and organizational commitment. More recent studies by Fitrianti (2023), Wahyuni (2024), and El Achi (2025) further confirm that transformational leadership contributes to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and resilience in demanding educational environments.

The findings can also be interpreted within the framework of organizational behaviour theory. Gibson et al. (2012) argue that employee performance is influenced by individual, psychological, and organizational factors. Leadership constitutes one of the most influential organizational factors because leaders shape communication patterns, organizational culture, and employee motivation. Similarly, Moeheriono (2012) emphasizes that effective leadership creates a positive organizational climate that ultimately contributes to higher productivity and work quality. Therefore, the significant effect identified in this study supports the proposition that leadership practices play an essential role in shaping teachers' professional performance.

The relatively modest contribution of transformational leadership (14.1%) suggests that teacher performance is influenced by multiple factors beyond leadership alone. Previous studies have identified several additional determinants of teacher performance, including work motivation (Sutrisno, 2018), job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2019), organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), work environment (Sedarmayanti, 2017), and workload management (Spector, 2003). Therefore, transformational leadership should be viewed as one important component within a broader framework of factors affecting teacher performance.

The findings of this study also provide important practical and theoretical implications. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on educational leadership by demonstrating that transformational leadership remains relevant in explaining teacher performance under conditions of high workload. The study extends previous findings by emphasizing the importance of leadership in helping teachers cope with increasing professional demands. Practically, the findings suggest that school principals should strengthen transformational leadership practices by communicating clear visions, providing professional support, encouraging innovation, and paying attention to teachers' individual needs. Educational policymakers may also use these findings as a basis for designing

leadership development programs that emphasize transformational competencies among school principals.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the study involved only one public senior high school, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the use of self-report questionnaires may have introduced response bias because respondents may have provided socially desirable answers. Third, the study examined only one independent variable, whereas teacher performance is influenced by numerous organizational and psychological factors. Future research is therefore recommended to include larger and more diverse samples, employ mixed-method approaches, and incorporate additional variables such as organizational commitment, work engagement, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher performance in educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh. The findings indicate that the principal's transformational leadership was in the high category, as reflected in the implementation of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These leadership practices show that the principal was able to provide role modelling, communicate a clear school vision, encourage teachers to think innovatively, and offer individual support in carrying out their professional responsibilities.

Teacher performance at SMAN 1 Payakumbuh was also found to be in the high category, indicating that teachers were able to perform their professional duties effectively in lesson planning, classroom implementation, learning evaluation, and other school-related responsibilities. The positive and significant influence found in this study confirms that stronger transformational leadership is associated with higher teacher performance, particularly in facing high workload conditions. Therefore, transformational leadership should be continuously strengthened as a strategic effort to improve teacher performance and support the quality of education in schools. Future studies are recommended to examine other factors, such as work motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, workload management, and teacher self-efficacy, in order to obtain a broader understanding of teacher performance.

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