

## **Implementation of Transformational Leadership of the Principal in Improving the Quality of Education at SDN Beji 01, Ungaran Timur District, Semarang Regency**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the influence of idealism, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual awareness of the principal's leadership on improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01. This research is descriptive qualitative; the subjects were the principal, teachers, and educational staff. Data collection techniques included interviews, documentation, and observation. Qualitative analysis was used, encompassing data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that: (1) The influence of the principal's leadership idealism includes: the ability to organize and influence school members to implement the school's vision and mission; providing an example; creating educational programs based on educational quality standards; creating a conducive and comfortable work environment, and motivating all school members to participate in improving the quality of education. (2) The principal's leadership inspirational motivation includes: providing advice, direction, guidance, and inspirational encouragement and motivation to school members; providing examples of time discipline, working hard, and adhering to shared commitments; and providing support to teachers and staff to develop their careers. (3) The principal's leadership intellectual stimulus includes: creating a collaborative culture and teamwork; cultivating problem solving through a system of discussion and deliberation; encouraging teachers and students to think critically, creatively, and innovatively; creating a learning atmosphere that is in line with development in science and technology; accepting criticism and ideas; and creating a culture of transparency. (4) The principal's leadership individual awareness includes: providing attention and concern for teachers and staff; holding regular meetings; involving teachers and staff in decision-making; providing time for personal consultations; giving awards; development of teacher professionalism through principal supervision. The impact of transformational leadership is the influence and encouragement of school residents to make better changes, teachers have adequate competence and the school achieves various kinds of achievements, both academic and non-academic.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership and Education Quality

## **A. Introduction**

As the leader of an educational unit, the principal has a significant responsibility in managing and optimizing all available resources to achieve educational goals. The principal's role extends beyond administrative duties to include leadership that inspires, motivates, and empowers the entire school community, as well as enhancing teacher professionalism. Therefore, the principal's leadership is a crucial factor in efforts to improve educational quality. One leadership activity is transformation. The principal's transformational leadership requires communication skills, particularly persuasive communication.

According to Rofik (2019: 207) transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers engage in a joint process to raise each other's morality and motivation to a higher level. Meanwhile, Wanuri et al. (2024: 44) explain that there are four indicators or components in measuring transformational leadership, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Wanuri et al. explain that transformational leadership can be seen from various aspects, including clearly communicating vision, mission, and goals; inspiring subordinates; encouraging good problem-solving management; providing support and encouraging staff development; and creating a good, comfortable, and mutually supportive work environment.

In an educational institution, the principal has significant influence in determining the direction of school regulations, ensuring maximum educational quality. As a top manager, the principal should not seek out errors or shortcomings in the school's oversight function. The principal is the highest leader within the school organization. Therefore, the institution's programs and their success are determined by the principal's ability to plan, organize, implement, control, and evaluate all programs created (Rostikawati, 2022:21).

Musfah (2023:1) argues that quality is a comprehensive description and characteristics of goods or services that demonstrate their ability to satisfy expected or implied needs. Discussing the quality of education means questioning how activities carried out in schools have been running well and can produce good schools that achieve standards and are in accordance with what is expected. As a manifestation of the government's efforts to create quality education, the government implements educational quality assurance, as an actualization of the objectives of the National Education Standards. This effort is explained in Article 4 of Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, namely "national education standards aim to guarantee the quality of national education in order to educate the life of the nation and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation.

Essentially, improving the quality of education requires a school quality improvement strategy, by granting authority and responsibility in decision-making to school leaders or principals, involving individuals from both school personnel and community members. The role of leadership is essential given the ever-evolving times. An effective principal is one who balances the roles of manager and leader. A leader must be able to

anticipate every change their school will face in order to improve the quality of education. As a leader, a principal must have a strategy to ensure these changes are realized and provide new innovations aimed at improving the quality of education. School change is an effort undertaken by a leader or principal to increase the school's effectiveness, as seen from the level of achievement of predetermined goals. In this case, change aims to improve the quality of education at the school.

The principal of SDN Beji 01 is known as an inspiring, transformational leader. He is highly committed to guiding and developing the potential of his teachers and staff. He consistently pursues new ideas, innovations, and creativity to improve the quality of education at the school. Furthermore, he demonstrates genuine care and concern for each individual under his leadership, creating a harmonious and supportive work environment.

Furthermore, in terms of school quality, improvements in education quality have also occurred during the principal's leadership. This improvement in education quality at SDN Beji 01 is reflected in the positive trend in the school's education report over the past three years (2022-2024). For example, the "Education Unit Programs and Policies" indicator experienced improvement, with the average score increasing from 66.48 in 2023 to 85.24 in 2024. Similarly, the "Leadership" indicator saw an increase from 54.9 in 2022 to 59.54 in 2023, and 76.64 in 2024. Another increase also occurred in the "Implementation of Innovative Practices" indicator, increasing from 74.25 in 2022 to 74.89 in 2023, and 82.01 in 2024. In addition to these three indicators, increases also occurred in other indicators such as curriculum management of educational units, security climate of educational units, psychological well-being of teachers, and participation of school residents. This increase indicates significant progress in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur Semarang Regency.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and describe: 1) the influence of the principal's idealism, 2) the principal's inspirational motivation, 3) the principal's intellectual stimulus, and 4) the principal's individual awareness in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01, East Ungaran District, Semarang Regency.

## **B. Methods**

This study uses a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research methods can be interpreted as research methods based on post-positivism/interpretive philosophy, used to research in natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation, data analysis is qualitative inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Salam, 2023: 2). Sugiyono (2019: 19) argues that qualitative research is often called naturalistic research because the research is conducted in natural conditions (natural settings). The research subjects consisted of: 1) Principals, 2) teachers, 3) educational staff, 4) heads of administration, 5) parents of students, and 6) students. Data collection techniques were interviews, documentation and observation. Data analysis used was qualitative analysis including data collection, data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions. The data validity test used triangulation, namely

source triangulation and method triangulation.

## **C. Result and Discussion**

### **1. The influence of the principal's leadership idealism in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01**

The principal of SDN Beji 01, East Ungaran, Semarang Regency, has the ability to formulate and influence school members to implement the vision and mission of the school. Implementing the school's vision and mission is not only about acting according to what has been determined, but also requires a deep understanding of the meaning of the vision and mission. The goal is for all school members to actively participate in designing various educational programs that are in line with the vision and mission. In this case, the principal is able to convince all school members to realize the vision and mission collectively. In this way, all school members will contribute together to improve the quality of education. The principal in formulating the school's vision and mission involves all stakeholders and through joint discussions and deliberations, designs educational programs guided by 8 educational quality standards, emphasizes exemplary behavior, and mobilizes school members to participate in improving the quality of education. Therefore, the principal in implementing the vision and mission to improve the quality of education can achieve good success.

In theory, the transformational leadership of the principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur Semarang Regency is in line with the opinion of Arifin et al. (2013:74) who stated that a transformational leader, in addition to building commitment, also really needs to have a clear vision. With a clear vision from a transformational leader, it will determine and influence the leadership process in an educational organization, and a transformational leader can appear as a charismatic leader. The educational program is also prepared based on 8 educational quality standards in accordance with PP No. 4 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Standards, where curriculum development is carried out by referring to national education standards to realize national education goals, including graduate competency standards, content, processes, educational assessment, educational personnel, infrastructure, management and financing. Suparwi, et al., (2024:3) explained that the idealized influence dimension is the behavior of a leader that makes him admired so that employees really praise, glorify, follow and emulate him. The principal's ability to implement the vision and mission to improve the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 is reflected in the principal's behavior by always having joint discussions, creating educational programs that are guided by educational quality standards, prioritizing role models, and mobilizing school residents to participate in efforts to improve the quality of education.

In addition, the influence of the principal's leadership idealism in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 by creating a beautiful and clean school environment, striving to improve the quality of learning, instilling character values and developing students' potential holistically both academically and non-academically, building cooperation with parents and the community. The principal also has a high commitment and integrity in improving the quality of education at school, proven by

instilling character values and developing students' potential holistically both academically and non-academically, and in terms of achievement, the students of SDN Beji 01 have academic and non-academic achievements. Not only that, the principal of SDN Beji 01 also has an all-out attitude in improving the quality of education by building cooperation with parents and the community to participate in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 East Ungaran, Semarang Regency. This is in line with the opinion of Aini (2021: 56), who stated that the characteristics of transformational leaders in terms of ideal influence are: 1) have big ideas, 2) have confidence, 3) have strong intentions, 4) have integrity, 5) have high commitment, 6) have consistency, 7) have work focus, 8) have an all out attitude, 9) are innovative, 10) have an attitude of sacrifice, and 11) have pride.

## **2. Inspirational motivation of the principal's leadership in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01**

The principal of SDN Beji 01 has the ability to provide inspirational motivation in the following ways: First, providing advice, direction, guidance, and encouragement that inspires and motivates both simultaneously and individually to the school community, especially teachers and staff. The provision of inspirational motivation is carried out once a week, namely every Saturday, with the intensity of providing inspirational motivation producing results where teacher performance is increasing, the performance of teachers who are not good becomes good and the good becomes even better.

The results of the above study are in line with the opinion of Humaisy, et al., (2024: 42) that the inspirational motivational behavior of transformational leadership is a leader who inspires and provides motivation to educational components. In providing motivation, a transformational leader is required to have skills in using words and is good at playing metaphors so that educational components are enthusiastic in achieving predetermined goals. Furthermore, Bass and Riggio (in Wanuri, et al., 2024: 44) argue that transformational leaders who apply inspirational motivation have an open attitude in giving challenges to their subordinates, there is clear two-way communication between superiors and subordinates, and have high enthusiasm and optimism in the team they are built. In terms of providing inspirational motivation, the principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur is done through direct communication both in a meeting atmosphere and individually. The teachers are also very enthusiastic in receiving advice, direction, guidance, and encouragement that inspires and motivates from the principal.

Second, the principal provides an example of time discipline, hard work, and always responsible and adheres to a shared commitment to improve the quality of education. The principal always comes to school early and consistently arrives before 7:00 am. The principal also provides opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their competencies through various training and educational activities, the principal also always accompanies teachers in working on report cards, always provides motivation during meetings and individually. The results of the study above are in line with Khasanah's theory (2019: 20) which states that the principal can motivate all teachers and employees to have a commitment to the organization's vision and support team spirit in achieving educational goals at school. Providing examples of time discipline,

working hard and always being responsible and adhering to a shared commitment means that school residents should in their daily activities adhere to a shared commitment to realizing the school's vision and mission in improving education at SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur, Semarang Regency.

Third, the principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur inspires teachers by providing support to teachers and staff to develop their careers by participating in various trainings, workshops, technical guidance, and KKG (Community Working Group). This is an effective way to increase their motivation and inspiration in teaching. Training provides opportunities for teachers to update their knowledge, develop new skills, and gain insight into innovative teaching methods. This will not only improve the quality of their teaching, but will also have a positive impact on teacher motivation and student enthusiasm for learning, which can ultimately improve the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur, Semarang Regency.

Based on Fitriawati's theory (2024: 258-165), it is explained that in addition to direct benefits for teachers and students, competency training for teachers also contributes to improving the image of the teaching profession in society. When teachers demonstrate good performance and are able to overcome educational challenges, this will increase public trust in educational institutions and the teaching profession as a whole. Communities that see teachers as qualified and competent educators tend to be more supportive of educational programs and actively participate in school activities, thus creating a positive partnership between the school and the community.

### **3. Intellectual stimulus for the principal's leadership in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01**

The principal of SDN Beji 01 has the ability to stimulate intellectually in various ways, including: First, creating a collaborative culture and teamwork, where the principal builds open and clear communication so that the school community feels comfortable sharing ideas and opinions. The principal in this case compiles the school's vision, mission and goals very clearly and clearly and measurably, so that the school community has the same understanding of what to achieve. The principal also creates a conducive and positive work environment, namely by helping each other and being transparent. By creating a collaborative culture and teamwork in carrying out school programs, it certainly shows that the principal of SDN Beji 01 has the ability to stimulate new solutions so that the work environment is conducive and comfortable, collaboration and teamwork are needed, this is proven by the existence of a collaboration system and teamwork communication between residents is increasingly open and transparent so as to create a comfortable and conducive work environment.

Second, the principal applies a professional attitude by always being responsible for his/her duties. Third, he/she is able to encourage teachers and students to think critically, creatively, and innovatively. The principal always invites teachers to discuss to explore new teaching methods that can increase student engagement in learning. The principal often holds reflections on learning and effective learning strategies. The principal also encourages students to participate in science competitions, allowing them to explore their interests and talents. The principal also creates a dynamic and innovative school environment, where all members of the school community are

encouraged to continue learning and developing to improve the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur. The results of this study are in line with the opinion of Wanuri, et al., (2024: 44) who stated that transformational leaders who apply intellectual stimulation have an attitude of always providing stimulation to their subordinates to think creatively, innovatively, and frame problems with different views. Leaders always provide space for subordinates to be directly involved in the problem-solving process, support the creation of many alternative solutions, and also see problems from various perspectives.

Fourth, the principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur is also able to create a learning atmosphere that is in accordance with the development of science and technology by providing support and facilities to develop teacher work productivity in an effort to improve the quality of education. Fifth, the principal is able to direct teachers and staff to provide constructive criticism, encourage the school community to think more deeply and find solutions to the problems they face, and is always willing to accept suggestions and criticisms given by teachers and staff. By accepting suggestions and criticisms from the school community, the principal has been able to train the school community to solve the problems faced. The emergence of suggestions indicates that there is a thought process to provide criticism of existing policies, so that providing criticism will lead someone to think about finding solutions to existing problems. This is in line with the opinion of Wanuri, et al., (2024: 20) who stated that the principal can foster creativity and innovation among teachers and staff by developing critical thinking and problem solving to make the school better.

Sixth, the principal of SDN Beji 01 is also open to ideas from subordinates, of course related to things that can improve the quality of education and these ideas are constructive ideas for the implementation of the school's vision and mission. Seventh, the principal is able to create a culture of transparency and accountability in managing the school budget, so that a bond of mutual trust arises among all school members and can cause the school to be trusted by the wider community. Eighth, the principal is able to build a habit of deliberation to solve problems, which is the key to reaching mutual agreements and strengthening relationships between individuals. Deliberation, as part of a good culture, involves a process of open discussion and mutual respect for opinions to reach solutions that are acceptable to all parties. The results of the above study are in line with the opinion of Humaisy, et al., (2024: 44) that the substance of intellectual stimulus behavior is a form of effort to increase intelligence, rationality, and problem solving carefully. Therefore, transformational leaders need to invite components of the educational organization to see problems from a new, more comprehensive and broader perspective. This kind of behavior is continuously carried out in order to create a holistic culture such as the emergence of a deliberation tradition as carried out by the Principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur Semarang Regency who was able to build a habit of deliberation to solve problems.

#### **4. Individual awareness of the principal's leadership in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01**

According to Suparwi et al. (2024: 3), leaders with individual awareness provide personal attention to subordinates and recognize individual needs and potential. In line with the research results, it was found that in the individual awareness dimension,

the principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur, Semarang Regency, carried out various methods and techniques, including:

First, Demonstrate deep and personal attention and concern for each teacher by: (a) communicating openly with teachers and staff in every meeting, (b) listening to input, suggestions and complaints from teachers or staff, (c) greeting all teachers, (d) providing motivation to teachers and staff, (e) providing social assistance to families of teachers affected by disaster, (f) providing welfare to educational staff. The results of the study are also in line with Hilmiyah's opinion (2015) that one of the attitudes of leaders who apply individual awareness is responsive leadership and cares about the concerns of members.

Based on the results of the researcher's observations, it shows that the principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur has concern and attention to the school community by conducting open communication; listening to input and providing solutions, although in this case not all teacher complaints have been followed up by the principal; even the principal provides social assistance to the families of teachers who have experienced disasters, provides welfare for teachers and employees, this shows that the principal really carries out his attention and concern for the school community, especially teachers and employees.

Second, holding regular meetings, held once a week every Saturday, can improve relationships, strengthen relationships between principals, teachers, and staff, and become a forum for exchanging information and ideas. In addition, regular meetings can also be a means for coordination, program evaluation, and joint decision-making. Third, involving teachers and staff in decision-making is a good practice in the principal's transformational leadership that can increase commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Fourth, making time for personal consultations, in this case the principal provides individual guidance and motivation, in addition to providing direction and input on teachers' personal problems.

The results of this study are in line with Hilmiyah's (2015) opinion that one of the attitudes of leaders who apply individual awareness is leadership that cares about the feelings and needs of their followers. The principal of SDN Beji 01 Ungaran Timur in providing direction and input not only on educational and learning issues but also provides input on the personal problems of the teachers if requested, even the principal also provides social assistance to the families of teachers affected by disasters as a form of attention and concern for each other.

Fifth, the principal gives awards, in this case there is no type of award given by the principal to outstanding teachers and students. Sixth, the development of teacher professionalism, by involving teachers in KKG activities, namely by presenting external speakers regarding education, so that teachers can exchange opinions about effective strategies in learning, training, workshops, technical guidance. These activities are held internally and externally. Activities organized by the school are usually specifically for teachers of SDN Beji 01, with an allocation of the school budget, while activities outside the school are also covered by the school.

In the awarding of awards and the development of teacher professionalism, this is in

accordance with Mahsusi's theory (2024: 92) that leadership behavior that demonstrates individual awareness is a leader who pays attention to the needs of his subordinates, gives them attention and gratitude, recognizes their talents, and delegates authority and acknowledges their contributions. This attitude is important for building a supportive work environment and motivating his subordinates.

Seventh, in an effort to improve the quality of education, the principal also conducts direct and indirect supervision, and carries out administrative supervision of teachers and supervision of class visits. This is in line with the opinion of Herayati (2023: 118) that the role of the principal as a supervisor by carrying out supervision can overcome problems faced by teachers and provide services to teachers so that they can use their abilities in carrying out their duties. Khasanah, (2019: 20) argues that in the educational sphere, the principal can act as a coach and advisor for teachers and their staff. As a coach, the principal can help teachers identify strengths and areas for professional development, their competencies and teacher performance. On the other hand, as an advisor, the principal can share their experiences, insights, and wisdom with teachers and staff, especially those who have just joined or are facing difficult situations.

#### **D. Conclusions**

1. The influence of the principal's leadership idealism in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 includes: the ability to influence school residents to implement the school's vision and mission; providing role models; creating educational programs based on educational quality standards; creating a conducive and comfortable work environment, and mobilizing all school residents to participate in improving the quality of education.
2. The principal's inspirational leadership motivation in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 includes: providing advice, direction, guidance, and encouragement that inspires and motivates the school community; providing examples of time discipline, working hard, and adhering to shared commitments; and providing support to teachers and staff to develop their careers.
3. The intellectual stimulus of the principal's leadership in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 includes: creating a collaborative culture and teamwork; cultivating problem solving through a system of discussion and deliberation; encouraging teachers and students to think critically, creatively, and innovatively; creating a learning atmosphere that is in accordance with the development of science and technology; accepting criticism and ideas that are useful for improving the quality of education; providing support for teachers and employees to develop work productivity through coaching tailored to needs; and creating a culture of transparency.
4. The individual awareness of the principal's leadership in improving the quality of education at SDN Beji 01 includes: providing attention and concern for teachers and staff; holding regular meetings; involving teachers and staff in decision-making; providing time for personal consultations; developing teacher professionalism through training and education activities and supervision of the principal.

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher provides suggestions including the following: 1) The principal should prioritize following up on teachers' complaints, so that teachers do not feel disappointed and feel less cared for, 2) teachers and employees should truly understand their main tasks and functions, as well as the responsibilities they have, so that the position of teachers and employees is not considered trivial or merely a managerial complement, but also plays an important role in improving quality, 3) the principal should provide rewards for teachers who have achievements and work well, so that the teachers concerned always increase motivation, raise the dignity of teachers, encourage healthy competition between teachers, so that it can improve the quality of the process and results of educational learning, 4) the education office should focus on developing transformational leadership among principals, by providing leadership training.

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