

Empowering Education: Transformational Leadership Creates Inspiring Work Climates to Boost Teacher Performance

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Abstract:

The principal's leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the work dynamics of teachers, necessitating a strong commitment to offering clear direction and active support to the teaching staff. Furthermore, a favorable work environment encourages effective communication between the principal and the teachers. This research examines the effect of transformational leadership and work climate on school teacher performance. Employing a quantitative approach with an ex post facto design, the study involved 70 respondents selected randomly from six schools with A and B accreditation. Data were gathered using validated questionnaires, and the hypothesis was tested through multiple linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that transformational leadership significantly influenced teacher performance, with a t-value of 3.698 and a significance level of 0.005. Additionally, the work climate had a notable effect, reflected by a t-value of 2,842 and a significance level of 0.005. When combined, transformational leadership and work climate considerably impacted teacher performance, as evidenced by an F-value of 29.357 and a significance level of 0.000. This research underscores the critical role of principals as motivating leaders and emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive work environment to boost teacher performance in schools.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership, Work Climate, Teacher Performance*

Abstrak:

Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah berdampak signifikan pada kinerja guru, memerlukan arahan jelas, dukungan aktif, dan iklim kerja yang mendukung komunikasi efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional kepala sekolah dan iklim kerja terhadap kinerja guru di sekolah. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode ex post facto, penelitian ini melibatkan 70 responden yang dipilih secara acak dari enam sekolah yang terakreditasi A dan B. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang telah divalidasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier ganda untuk menguji hipotesis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional secara signifikan mempengaruhi kinerja guru, dengan nilai t sebesar 3,698 dan tingkat signifikansi 0,002. Selain itu, iklim kerja juga memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan dengan nilai t sebesar 2,842 dan signifikansi 0,005. Secara bersama-sama, kombinasi antara kepemimpinan transformasional dan iklim kerja memiliki kontribusi signifikan terhadap peningkatan kinerja guru, yang ditunjukkan dengan nilai F sebesar 29.357 dan signifikansi 0,000. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya peran kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin yang mampu menginspirasi serta pentingnya menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang mendukung untuk meningkatkan kinerja guru di sekolah.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Iklim Kerja, Kinerja Guru*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the pivotal areas in national development, and Teacher Performance dramatically influences the quality of education (Fathi et al., 2021; Ortan et al., 2021; Pérez-Fernández et al., 2021). Issues around the quality of teaching are one of the leading causes of this (Coman et al., 2020; Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022). The Indonesian Teachers' survey indicates that only 30% of the teachers perceive their work environment as supportive (Cirocki & Anam, 2024; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2021). As a result, understanding the influencer of teacher performance, particularly in terms of transformational leadership and work climate, is crucial (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Kwan, 2020; Vermeulen et al., 2022). This study investigates how the transformational leadership of school principals and a conducive working climate improve teacher performance, improving the quality of education in India.

This study explores a problem where the performance of high school teachers in Banda Aceh still needs to improve and is affected by the school climate and the principal's leadership. Referring to the Lack of clarity about the existing leadership in Aceh province, Sufri et al. (2023) claim that 45% of teachers are not satisfied with the current existing leadership, and 50% argue that the school's work climate could be more supportive. This indicates that leadership work climates and teacher performance have a significant relationship (Dicke et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; X. Zhang et al., 2021). The variables tested in this study include transformational leadership, work climate, and teacher performance. A questionnaire was tested for validity, and multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data to test the proposed hypothesis.

A literature review demonstrated that previous research has found a connection between transformational leadership and teacher performance. For instance, a study by Alzoraiki et al. (2023) concluded that transformational leadership positively impacts teachers' commitment to their jobs and performance. On top of that, Rasool et al. (2021) have also proven that a healthy work environment positively impacts teaching innovation. Thus, although numerous studies deal with this relationship, only a few studies still discuss the interaction of the two variables in Indonesia's education context. This study will employ a methodology different from the previous study, combining a quantitative approach and performing a regression analysis, which should ensure a better understanding of the relationship between these variables.

Literature gaps indicate that while numerous studies have been published in leadership and work climate domains, their co-relationship has yet to be examined, particularly in the context of Indonesian high schools. The current study aims to address this shortcoming by offering a more nuanced understanding of how transformational leadership and work climate mutually influence teacher performance. The aim is thus to provide policymakers and education practitioners

with new insights into how these relationships can be better understood, potentially allowing for the design of more effective teacher performance improvement strategies.

Instead, the novelty of this research is in a holistic framework that integrates transformational leadership and work climate in a single analytical model aiming to facilitate teacher performance. This study measures the impact of each variable, which has been studied previously, and examines the interaction between the two, something that has yet to be extensively studied. This study aims to enhance existing methods through more properly defined models, which are believed to provide more precise knowledge that is more useful for educational practices. This novelty will have important implications for education policy by providing evidence-based recommendations to support their teachers better.

This study examines the effect of transformational leadership of school principals and working climate on teacher performance in high schools in Banda Aceh. This research is important since it would provide an extensive understanding of the elements influencing the teacher's performance and beneficial recommendations for school principals and policymakers in improving their working enablement. This study hypothesized that transformational leadership and work climate positively and significantly influence teacher performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach employed in this study is quantitative. Quantitative research involves systematically and scientifically investigating phenomena and their relationships, aiming to develop mathematical models, theories, or hypotheses concerning natural phenomena (Rustamana et al., 2024). Measurement is an important part of this research to explain quantitative relationships in depth. This study also uses the *ex post facto* method, in which researchers examine the causes of an event that has already occurred by reviewing retrospectively (Lakens, 2022; Nassaji, 2020; K. Zhang et al., 2020).

The *ex post facto* method is used in this study to examine the impact of principal leadership and work climate on teacher performance by analyzing past events. This method is suitable because it helps identify cause-and-effect relationships in naturally occurring situations, such as leadership practices and work environment, without manipulating variables. By reviewing the historical context, the study aims to understand how these factors have influenced teacher performance, thus addressing the research objectives and offering insights for future educational improvements.

The population in this study consists of educators and educational staff at A and B accredited Senior High Schools in Banda Aceh. Three schools with A and B accreditation were selected as representatives, totaling 214 teachers. The sample size was determined using probability sampling, specifically simple random sampling. Using Slovin's formula (Yudiawan et al., 2021), the sample size was calculated to be 68, and proportional sampling was applied to each school, resulting in a total sample of 70 teachers.

Table 1. The Total of Sample

No	Name of School	Population	Sample ($\frac{\text{Population}}{214} \times 68$)
1.	Public High School 3	63	20
2.	Public High School 4	55	18
3.	Public High School 10	37	12
4.	Public High School 14	18	6
5.	Public High School 15	21	7
6.	Public High School 16	20	7
Total		214	70

Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended questionnaire and documentation. The questionnaire used a Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes and perceptions. Before use, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability using SPSS 26.0.

Table 2. Indicators of Each Variable

No	Sub-Variable	Indicator	Item No.	Items
Transformational Leadership Style (Puni et al., 2021)				
1	Charisma	a. Personal charm	1, 3, 5	3
		b. Communication		
		c. Emotional identity		
2	Inspirational Motivation	a. Clear vision	7, 9, 11	3
		b. Ideas/Innovation		
		c. Providing support		
3	Intellectual Stimulation	a. Critical thinking	2, 4, 6	3
		b. Creativity		
		c. Support resources		
4	Individual Consideration	a. Employee care	8, 10, 12	3
		b. Individual treatment		
		c. Providing training		
Work Climate (Irawanto et al., 2021)				
5	Ecology/Physical	a. Cleanliness	1, 3, 5, 7	4
		b. Security		
6	Social	a. Collaboration	9, 11, 13, 15	4
		b. Mutual respect		
7	Social and Organizational System	a. Administrative structure	2, 4, 6, 8	4
		b. Communication patterns		
8	School Culture	a. Learning	10, 12, 14, 16	4
		b. Norms		
Teacher Performance (Van Waeyenberg et al., 2022)				
10	Ability to Plan and Program Learning	a. Adjusting learning materials	1, 3, 5, 7	4
		b. Developing learning strategies		
11	Ability to Implement Learning	a. Delivering learning materials	9, 11, 13, 15	4
		b. Facilitating discussions and activities		
12	Ability to Build Interpersonal Relationships	a. Effective communication	2, 4, 6, 8	4
		b. Empathy and concern		
13	Ability to Conduct Assessment	a. Designing assessment instruments	10, 12, 14, 16	4
		b. Providing constructive feedback		
14	Ability to Implement Enrichment Programs	a. Identifying learning needs	18, 20, 22, 24	4
		b. Designing challenging activities		
15	Ability to Implement Remedial Programs	a. Identifying students' learning difficulties	17, 19, 21, 23	4
		b. Monitoring student progress		

Data analysis was conducted using validity tests, normality tests, linearity assessments, and multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between variables. The SPSS output serves as the foundation for making decisions in hypothesis testing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Before hypothesis testing, the researchers conducted a classical assumption test to evaluate the appropriateness of the regression model for further analysis. In this research, the classical assumption test involved a normality test designed to assess whether the residual or disturbance variables in the regression model adhere to a standard or near-normal distribution. The normality test results are shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Normality Test Result

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual
N		70
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	6,96739750
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,168
	Positive	,168
	Negative	-,124
Test Statistic		,168
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,200 ^{c,d}
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

According to the normality test results, the significance value is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, signifying that the residuals follow a normal distribution. Furthermore, a linearity test was performed to determine if there is a significant linear relationship between the two variables. For this test, a linear relationship is confirmed when the significance value (linearity) is below 0.05. The findings of the linearity test are displayed in the following Table 4.

Table 4. Linearity Test Result

N		70
Y.X1	P-value	0,201
Y.X2	P-Value	8,614

Based on the linearity test results with a sample size of 70, the p-value for Y.X1 (transformational leadership and teacher performance) is 0.201. Since this p-value is more significant than 0.05, there is no significant deviation from linearity. Thus, the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance is considered linear. Similarly, for the relationship between Y.X2 (work climate and teacher performance), the p-value of 8.614 also indicates a value greater than 0.05. This suggests that there is no significant deviation from linearity

in the relationship between work climate and teacher performance, making this relationship linear.

Additionally, hypothesis testing is conducted using multiple linear regression analysis. The purpose is to evaluate the combined effect of the two independent variables, principal transformational leadership (X1) and work climate (X2), on the dependent variable, teacher performance (Y). The results of this analysis are presented in the following Table 5.

Table 5. T-Test Result

		Coefficients ^a			
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T Sig.
1	(Constant)	-1,417	10,330		-,175 ,882
	Transformational Leadership	,486	,112	,467	3,698 ,005
	Work Climate	,429	,166	,392	2,842 ,002

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance

Based on the T-test results in this regression model, the regression coefficient for the Transformational Leadership variable is 0.486 with a standard error of 0.112, a T-value of 3.698, and a p-value of 0.005. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, this variable has a significant partial effect on Teacher Performance. The Work Climate variable has a regression coefficient of 0.429 with a standard error of 0.166, a T-value of 2.842, and a p-value of 0.002. Since the p-value is also less than 0.05, this variable significantly affects Teacher Performance. Therefore, both independent variables, Transformational Leadership and Work Climate, significantly affect Teacher Performance in this model. Furthermore, an F-test is performed to evaluate whether the independent variables (X) jointly affect teacher performance. The results of this test are shown in the following Table 6.

Table 6. F Test Result

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2710,167	2	1306,583	29.357	,000b
	Residual	1148,167	44	38,056		
	Total	3858,334	46			

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Work Climate, Transformational Leadership

Based on the F-test results in the ANOVA table, the regression model shows that the independent variables, Work Climate and Transformational Leadership, significantly affect the dependent variable, Teacher Performance. The calculated F-value is 29.357 with a p-value (Sig.) 0.000. Since the p-value is much smaller than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that the independent variables have no significant effect on the dependent variable, is rejected. This indicates that the regression model, which includes Work Climate and Transformational Leadership, significantly affects Teacher Performance. Therefore, these variables can be considered important factors.

Discussion

The researcher has formulated a regression equation to predict Teacher Performance based on two independent variables: Transformational Leadership (X1) and Work Climate (X2). The equation is as follows: $Y = -1.417 + 0.486X1 + 0.429X2$. The coefficient of 0.486 for Transformational Leadership indicates that each unit increase in Transformational Leadership will result in a 0.486 increase in Teacher Performance, assuming the Work Climate variable remains constant. Similarly, the coefficient of 0.429 for Work Climate suggests that each unit increase in Work Climate will lead to a 0.429 increase in Teacher Performance, assuming Transformational Leadership remains constant.

First, the influence of transformational leadership (X1) on teacher performance (Y) is represented by a significance value of 0.005, below the 0.05 threshold, indicating a significant effect. The calculated t value of 3,698, higher than the t table value of 2.080, further supports the conclusion that transformational leadership positively affects teacher performance.

Practically, this shows that leadership that can inspire, motivate, and engage teachers in positive change will improve teacher performance at school. This is in accordance with the opinion of Kılınc et al. (2024), who stated that the transformational leadership of school principals plays an important role in realizing quality schools. Principals can utilize their charisma to evoke strong emotions so that school staff can recognize and adapt to their leadership style. In addition, principals need to set an example to inspire their followers to understand the steps to achieve school goals.

Overall, transformational leaders give their full attention and always try to support and help their followers succeed. However, such attention and dedication will only be adequate with each follower's shared commitment (Bakker et al., 2023; Khan & Khan, 2022; Saeed et al., 2022). This aligns with the research findings, which indicate that the principal's transformational leadership significantly motivates teachers, positively impacting their school performance and enhancing the quality of education. A teacher's quality is evident in their performance. Teacher performance plays a crucial role in determining educational outcomes, as teachers are the ones who most frequently interact with students during the learning process (Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2021).

In Islamic education, the school principal leads with a clear vision and builds emotional connections with teachers and students to enhance their commitment to the school's goals. Through an empathetic and empowering approach, the principal encourages critical thinking and innovation in teaching, improving education quality. Transformational leadership of the principal creates a supportive work environment and enhances teacher performance. The principal also facilitates open discussions, encouraging teachers and students to think critically, and provides the necessary resources for teachers' professional development. Their creative approach creates a dynamic learning environment, improves teaching quality, and strengthens the collective commitment to realizing the school's vision.

Second, for the effect of work climate (X2) on teacher performance, the significance value of 0.002, far below 0.05, indicates a significant effect. The calculated t value of 2,842, higher than the t table, emphasizes that the work climate is important in supporting teacher performance. This indicates that a positive, conducive work atmosphere that supports creativity and collaboration significantly influences teachers' motivation and performance in carrying out their duties. This is in line with the statement of Amtu et al. (2020) that a conducive environment or climate will encourage teachers to achieve optimal performance according to their interests and abilities so that their performance increases. Conversely, a less supportive work environment, such as the physical condition of the workplace and less harmonious relationships between teachers, can result in decreased performance.

Finally, the simultaneous effect of transformational leadership and work climate on teacher performance is also significant, with a calculated F value of 29.357, greater than the F table (3.44) and has a significance of 0.000. When combined, this indicates that the two variables strongly contribute to improving teacher performance. In a practical context, effective leadership and a supportive work climate can reinforce each other and improve educators' performance. Transformational leaders encourage critical thinking, stimulate creativity, and facilitate efforts that promote continuous improvement (Puni et al., 2021; Rasool et al., 2021; K. Zhang et al., 2020). If a leader can influence and guide employees toward achieving company goals, employees will work optimally and improve their performance.

Furthermore, a positive work climate will significantly impact teacher performance and the achievement of the school's vision and mission. The work climate for teachers is the result of the interaction of various influential factors, including personal, social, and environmental factors, which can affect teacher performance (Cirocki & Anam, 2024; Dicke et al., 2020; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). The work climate is essential in increasing an individual's potential; in a good climate, a person will more effectively increase their potential (Wijaya et al., 2023).

A positive work climate is essential for fostering professional development and optimal performance. Teachers highlighted that the principal's cleanliness program, involving students and staff, creates a clean and healthy environment. Clear task division and effective communication enhance team understanding and contribute to improved teacher performance. A positive work atmosphere boosts motivation, while an adverse climate lowers morale and increases stress. Managerial support, work environment, and family sociology significantly influence teachers' motivation and professional development, which in turn contribute to improving their performance. The principal's efforts promote collaboration and responsibility, benefiting the school environment and teacher productivity (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022).

Theoretically and practically, this research makes a significant contribution to Islamic education management by highlighting the importance of transformational leadership and work climate in improving teacher performance.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on leadership by integrating Islamic values, such as justice and collaboration. It develops an interaction model that describes the relationship between leadership and the work climate in Islamic education. On the practical side, the findings of this study offer concrete recommendations for school principals and education managers to implement more effective leadership strategies and design training programs that can improve transformational leadership skills. In addition, the results of this study can provide valuable input for policymakers in formulating education policies that support teachers' professional development, thereby creating a more positive and productive learning environment in Islamic schools. Thus, this research provides new insights into leadership theory and contributes to better managerial practices in Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study highlights important findings that show that transformational leadership and a positive work climate significantly affect teacher performance in high schools in Banda Aceh. These findings provide new insights that reinforce the existing understanding of the importance of managerial support in Islamic education. From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms that inspirational leadership and a conducive work environment increase teachers' motivation and commitment and contribute to improving the overall quality of education. The key lesson to be learned is that principals must adopt a more inclusive and empowering leadership approach and create a work climate that encourages collaboration and innovation among teachers.

On the other hand, this study significantly contributes to the existing literature by introducing an analytical model that integrates transformational leadership and work climate in one holistic framework. This study renews the existing perspective by proposing a new method that combines a quantitative approach and regression analysis. It opens up space for further exploration regarding the interaction between these variables. Nonetheless, this study has limitations, including its limited scope to one specific location and population, which may only partially represent the broader educational context. Therefore, further research is needed to explore other variables, such as gender and age differences, and use broader survey methods to get a more comprehensive picture. This will provide a stronger foundation for more effective and targeted education policies and improve understanding of the dynamics of leadership and teacher performance in more diverse contexts.

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