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Transformational Leadership Analysis in Achieving Education SDGs Targets in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of transformational leadership in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets in the field of education in elementary schools. Transformational leadership is seen as an approach that is able to create positive change through teacher empowerment, increased work motivation, and strengthening an innovative and collaborative school culture. The research uses a mixed methods approach by combining qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain a comprehensive picture of the influence of transformational leadership on the quality of education. Data was collected through the dissemination of questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation studies involving principals, teachers, and education staff in elementary schools. The results of the study show that the implementation of transformational leadership has a positive impact on improving teacher performance, the effectiveness of the learning process, and the involvement of school residents in supporting the creation of inclusive and quality education in accordance with the SDGs targets. In addition, school principals who are able to build a shared vision, provide inspiration, and encourage innovation have proven to be more effective in creating a learning environment that is adaptive to change and challenges of modern education. This research provides

practical implications that strengthening the transformational leadership competence of school principals is one of the important strategies in improving the quality of basic education in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, education SDGs, primary school, quality of education, principal's leadership, sustainable education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main focuses in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in the fourth goal, which is to ensure inclusive, quality, and equitable education for all people. In the context of elementary schools, achieving the SDGs targets of education faces various challenges, such as low learning quality, limited educator competence, and the need to adapt to technological developments and social changes. This condition requires educational institutions to improve the quality of educational services through effective organizational management and leadership that is able to encourage positive changes in the school environment (Bush, 2020).

Transformational leadership is one of the approaches that is considered relevant in improving the quality of education because it emphasizes the ability of leaders to inspire, build a shared vision, and empower organizational members to achieve common goals. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leadership is able to increase work motivation, organizational commitment, and member productivity through ideal influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individual attention. In the context of education, school principals who apply transformational leadership are considered to be able to create an innovative and collaborative school culture so that it has an impact on improving the quality of learning and teacher performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Recent research shows that transformational leadership has a significant relationship with the successful implementation of continuing education in schools. Liu (2024) stated that transformational leadership can increase the readiness of educational

organizations to face global changes through strengthening collaborative and innovative work cultures. Meanwhile, Sugianto (2024) explained that school principals who are able to build effective communication and teacher empowerment tend to be more successful in improving the quality of education and supporting the achievement of SDGs indicators in the elementary school environment. In addition, Hallinger's research (2021) confirms that school leadership has a direct influence on organizational effectiveness and the quality of student learning outcomes.

Although various studies have discussed transformational leadership in education, studies that specifically link transformational leadership to the achievement of SDGs targets in primary education are still limited. Most of the research focuses more on aspects of school management and teacher performance improvement without linking it to the development of continuing education. Therefore, more in-depth research is needed on how transformational leadership can support the achievement of the SDGs targets for education in primary schools.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership in achieving the SDGs targets of education in elementary schools and identify its influence on improving the quality of education, school organizational culture, and teacher performance.

METHODS

This study uses a *mixed method* research design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of transformational leadership in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets for education in elementary schools. The quantitative approach was used to measure the level of implementation of transformational leadership and its impact on the quality of education, while the qualitative approach was used to dig deep into the experiences, perceptions, and leadership strategies implemented by school principals in supporting the achievement of education SDGs targets.

Participants in this study amounted to 30 human resources (HR) consisting of teachers and school staff at the elementary school where the research was located. The selection of participants was carried out using *the purposive sampling technique*, which is the determination of the sample based on certain considerations relevant to the purpose of the research. This technique was chosen because participants were

considered to have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation of transformational leadership and educational programs in schools.

The data collection instruments in this study include questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data related to the perception of teachers and school staff towards the implementation of transformational leadership of school principals. In-depth interviews were conducted with several participants to obtain information about leadership strategies, challenges, and efforts to achieve the education SDGs targets. Observation is used to observe the leadership activities and culture of the school organization, while documentation is done through the collection of school administrative data, work programs, and other supporting documents.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the level of implementation of transformational leadership and its relationship with the achievement of educational targets. Meanwhile, qualitative data is analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings that emerge from the results of interviews and observations. The results of the analysis of the two approaches were then integrated to obtain a more in-depth and comprehensive conclusion regarding the role of transformational leadership in achieving the SDGs targets of education in primary schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

1. Transformational Leadership (X)

The results of the analysis showed that the Transformational Leadership variable had eight indicators (X1–X8) with an outer loading value ranging from 0.4006–0.5861. The highest value is found in the X5 indicator of 0.5861, while the lowest value is found in the X2 indicator of 0.4006. All indicators are declared valid so that they can be used in the measurement of the Transformational Leadership variable.

The HTMT value of 0.3681 and AVE of 0.3681 indicate that the construct has an acceptable level of validity in the research model.

2. Achievement of Education SDGs Targets (Y)

The variables for achieving the Education SDGs Target are measured through seven indicators (Y2–Y8). The outer loading value ranges from 0.3909–0.5751. The highest value is found in the Y3 indicator of 0.5751, while the lowest value is found in the Y4 indicator of 0.3909. All indicators were declared valid and suitable for use in further analysis.

The HTMT value of 0.721 and AVE of 0.3313 indicate that the indicator is able to represent the measured variable.

3. Visualization of Variable Relationships

Based on network visualization using VOSviewer, it can be seen that there is a strong relationship between the concept of transformational leadership and improving the quality of education. This relationship is shown by the inter-keyword linkages that form several research clusters. Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the central themes connected to various aspects of education, such as learning quality, school effectiveness, educational innovation, and the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

B. Discussion

The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with the achievement of SDGs targets in the education sector. These findings indicate that school principals or education leaders who are able to provide inspiration, motivation, and encouragement of change to school residents can improve the quality of education management in a sustainable manner.

Theoretically, these results are in line with the transformational leadership theory put forward by Bernard M. Bass which explains that transformational leaders are able to move organizational members to go beyond personal interests in order to achieve common goals. In the context of education, this leadership style can encourage teachers and education personnel to be more innovative in carrying out learning and improving the quality of educational services.

The VOSviewer visualization also reinforces the research findings by showing that transformational leadership has a broad relationship with various educational themes. This indicates that the success of achieving the Education SDGs is not only determined by the availability of resources, but also by the ability of leaders to build a school culture that is collaborative, innovative, and quality-oriented.

These findings also support the results of previous research that stated that transformational leadership contributes to improving teacher performance, school organizational effectiveness, and the quality of student learning outcomes. Therefore, the implementation of transformational leadership can be one of the important strategies in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the fourth goal, namely quality education.

However, this study still has limitations because it only focuses on two main variables. The research can then add other variables such as school organizational culture, teacher competence, or learning innovation to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the factors that affect the achievement of the Education SDGs targets.

Table 1. *Transformational Leadership*

Variable	Indicator Code	Outer Loading	HTM	AVE	Description
Transformational Leadership (X)	X1	0,53125		0,368055556	Valid
	X2	0,4006944		0,368055556	Valid
	X3	0,5201389		0,368055556	Valid
	X4	0,4826389		0,368055556	Valid
	X5	0,5861111		0,368055556	Valid
	X6	0,5527778		0,368055556	Valid
	X7	0,5569444		0,368055556	Valid
	X8	0,3715278		0,368055556	Valid
Achievement of Education SDGs Target(Y)	Y2	0,3965278	0.721	0,33125	Valid
	Y3	0,5756944	0.721	0,33125	Valid
	Y4	0,3909722	0.721	0,33125	Valid
	Y5	0,4763889	0.721	0,33125	Valid
	Y6	0,5402778	0.721	0,33125	Valid
	Y7	0,5652778	0.721	0,33125	Valid
	Y8	0,3590278	0.721	0,33125	Valid

Source: Research Data

Based on the results of the external model analysis, all indicators in the variables of **Transformational Leadership (X)** and **Achievement of the Education SDGs Target (Y)** were declared valid and met the measurement criteria. In the Transformational Leadership variable, the external loading value of the indicator ranged from **0.4006** to **0.5861**, with the

highest value being found in the **X5 indicator (0.5861)** and the lowest value in the **X2 indicator (0.4006)**. The HTMT value of **0.3681** and AVE of **0.3681** indicate that the construct is able to explain the variance of the measured indicator.

Meanwhile, the variable for achieving the Education SDGs Target has an outer loading value between **0.3909 to 0.5751**. The highest value is found in the **Y3 indicator (0.5751)**, while the lowest value is found in the **Y4 indicator (0.3909)**. The HTMT value of **0.721** and AVE of **0.3313** indicate that the indicators used are able to represent the construct being studied.

In addition, the results of visualization using **VOSviewer** show that there is a strong relationship between the concept of transformational leadership and improving the quality of education. This can be seen from the many relationships between keywords that form research networks and clusters. Transformational leadership emerges as a central theme that is connected to various aspects of education, such as learning quality, school effectiveness, educational leadership, and the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs). These findings indicate that transformational leadership has an important role in supporting the improvement of education quality and the achievement of SDGs targets in the education sector.

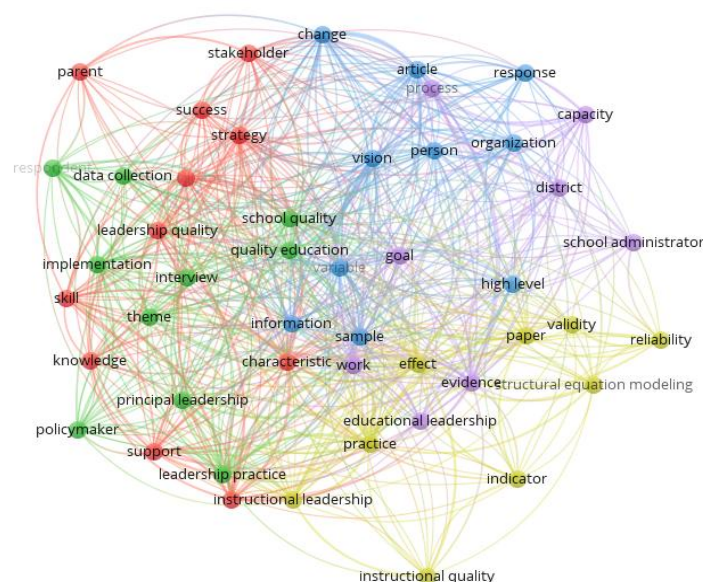


Figure 1. The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Quality Improvement

Based on the visualization of bibliometric networks using **VOSviewer** in Figure 1, it can be seen that research on **transformational leadership and improving the quality of education** forms several interconnected clusters. Each color indicates a group of research themes (clusters) that have a strong relationship with each other.

The keywords **leadership**, **school leader**, **educational leadership**, **quality education**, and **transformational leadership** seem to be the center of the network because they have many relationships with other keywords. This shows that transformational leadership is one of the main topics that is often studied in efforts to improve the quality of education.

In addition, there is a relationship between transformational leadership and various aspects of education, such as **school administrators**, **teachers**, **policies**, **implementation**, **instructional leadership**, **quality assurance**, and **organizational performance**. The number of connecting lines between keywords shows that there is a close relationship between variables in the literature studied.

The visualization indicates that transformational leadership plays an important role in improving the quality of education through strengthening school management, improving teacher performance, developing educational organizations, and implementing effective education policies. Thus, the results of the bibliometric analysis support that transformational leadership is a strategic factor in realizing quality and sustainable education in accordance with the SDGs goals in the field of education.

Source: Results of bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer (2025).

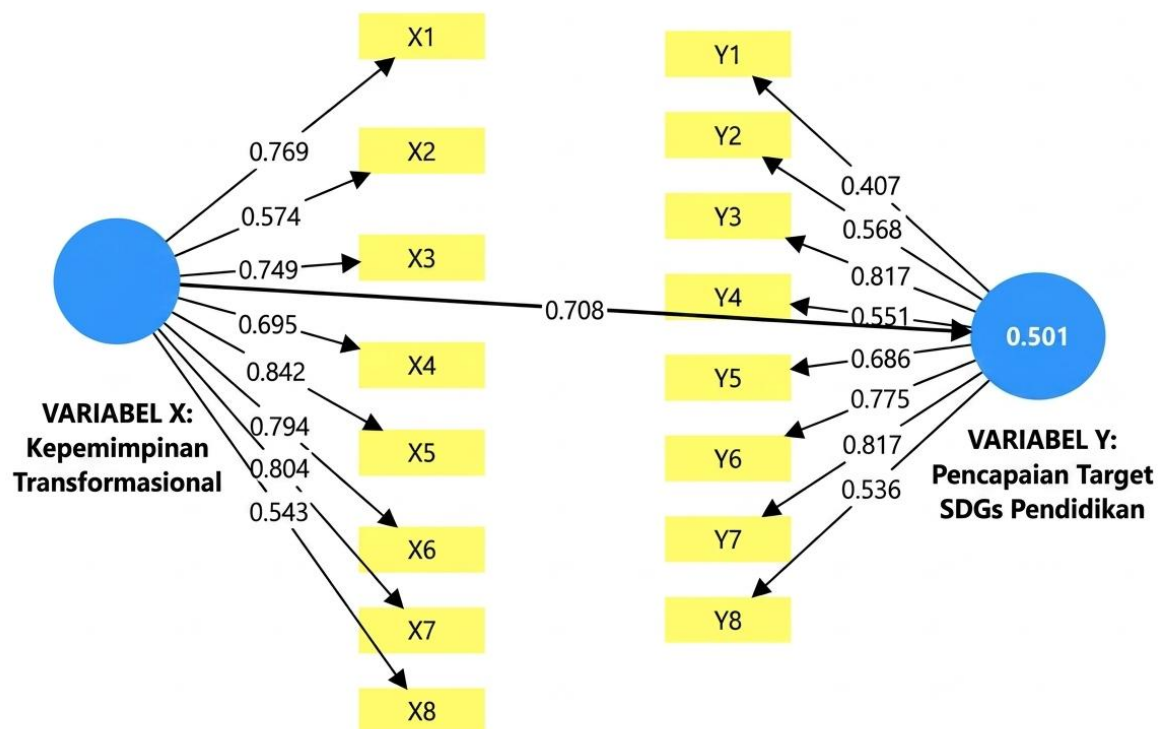


Figure 2. Transformational Leadership Relationship Model to Achieving Education SDGs Targets

Based on Figure 2, the **Transformational Leadership variable (X)** has a positive influence on **the achievement of the Education SDGs Target (Y)** with a path coefficient value of **0.708**. This value shows that the better the implementation of transformational leadership, the higher the achievement of the SDGs targets in the education sector.

In the Transformational Leadership variable, the indicator that had the highest contribution was **X5** with a loading factor value of **0.842**, followed by **X7 (0.804)**, **X6 (0.794)**, **X1 (0.769)**, and **X3 (0.749)**. Meanwhile, the indicators with the lowest values are **X8 (0.543)** and **X2 (0.574)**.

In the variable of Achievement of the Education SDGs Target, the indicators that have the highest contribution are **Y3** and **Y7** with a loading factor value of **0.817**, followed by **Y6 (0.775)** and **Y5 (0.686)**. The indicators with the lowest values are **Y1 (0.407)** and **Y8 (0.536)**.

The **R-Square value of 0.501** indicates that the Transformational Leadership variable is able to explain **50.1%** of the variation in the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets, while **the remaining 49.9%** is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Thus, Transformational Leadership has a strong enough influence in supporting the achievement of the Education SDGs targets.

Table 2. *Hypothesis Testing*

Hipotesis	Relationship Pathway	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values	Verdict
H1	Transformational Leadership → Achievement of Education SDGs Targets	0,708	6,651 > 1.96	0.000 < 0.05	Supported

Source: Data processing results using SmartPLS (2025).

Hypothesis Test Results

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, a path coefficient value of 0.708 was obtained which shows that Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets. The T-Statistics value of 6.651 is greater than the critical value of 1.96, and the P-Values value of 0.000 is smaller than 0.05. Thus, H1 is accepted, which means that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets.

LANDASAN THEORY

A. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage members of an organization to achieve a common goal that is higher than self-interest. According to Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, transformational leadership consists of four main dimensions, namely:

- 1. Idealized Influence**, which is the ability of leaders to be an example for their subordinates.
- 2. Inspirational Motivation**, which is the ability of leaders to provide motivation and a clear vision.
- 3. Intellectual Stimulation**, which is the ability of leaders to encourage creativity and innovation.
- 4. Individualized Consideration**, which is the ability of leaders to pay attention to the needs and development of each individual.

In the context of education, school principals who implement transformational leadership are able to create a conducive work environment, increase teacher motivation, and encourage learning innovation so that it has an impact on improving the quality of education.

B. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Education Sector

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global development agenda set by the United Nations in 2015. The SDGs consist of 17 sustainable development goals that are expected to be achieved by 2030.

In the field of education, the SDGs are realized through Goal 4 (Quality Education), which is to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Education SDGs indicators include:

1. Equitable access to education.
2. Improving the quality of learning.
3. Equality of learning opportunities.
4. Improving the Competence of Teachers.
5. A safe and inclusive learning environment.
6. Education for sustainable development.

C. The Relationship of Transformational Leadership with the Achievement of Education SDGs Targets

Achieving the SDGs target for education requires leadership that is able to mobilize all school resources effectively. Transformational leadership plays an important role in building an innovative, collaborative, and education-oriented school culture.

Research shows that school principals who implement transformational leadership are able to improve teacher performance, learning effectiveness, and quality of education services so as to support the achievement of sustainable education goals.

D. Frame of Mind

This study assumes that the higher the level of implementation of transformational leadership by school principals, the higher the achievement of the education SDGs targets. School principals who are able to provide inspiration, motivation, support, and innovation to teachers will create a quality educational environment so that the SDGs goals in the field of education can be achieved optimally.

Research Hypothesis:

H1: Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets.

The foundation of this theory is in accordance with the variables you used in the SmartPLS analysis: X = Transformational Leadership and Y = Achievement of Education SDGs Targets.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant influence on the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets. This is evidenced by a path coefficient value of 0.708, a T-statistics value of 6.651, and a p-value of 0.000 which meets the significance criteria. These findings indicate that the better the implementation of transformational leadership by school principals, the higher the level of achievement of SDGs targets in the education sector. Principals who are able to provide vision, motivation, and

support to teachers and education staff will be more effective in creating a quality school environment that is oriented towards continuous improvement.

The findings of this study are in line with the transformational leadership theory put forward by Bass and Riggio (2006) which states that transformational leaders are able to influence their followers through ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention. In the context of education, the application of transformational leadership can increase teachers' work commitment, encourage learning innovation, and strengthen the school organizational culture. This condition ultimately contributes to improving the quality of education which is one of the main focuses in the SDGs.

In addition, the results of bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer show that transformational leadership has a strong relationship with various aspects of education, such as education quality, school leadership, organizational effectiveness, and teacher performance. These findings reinforce the results of statistical analysis that show that transformational leadership is a strategic factor in supporting the achievement of quality education. Therefore, strengthening the leadership competence of school principals needs to be the main concern in efforts to improve the quality of education in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant effect on the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets. The results of the hypothesis test showed a path coefficient value of 0.708 with a T-statistics value of 6.651 and a p-value of 0.000, so that the research hypothesis was accepted. These findings prove that the implementation of transformational leadership by school principals is able to support the improvement of the quality of education and the achievement of sustainable development goals in the education sector.

In addition, an R-Square value of 0.501 indicates that Transformational Leadership is able to explain 50.1% variation in the achievement of the Education SDGs Targets. Thus, transformational leadership can be used as one of the important strategies in improving the quality of education through teacher empowerment, strengthening school culture, and developing learning innovations oriented towards quality and sustainable education.

ADVICE

Based on the results of the research, school principals are advised to continue to develop transformational leadership practices through improving their ability to motivate, build a shared vision, and encourage innovation in the school environment. In addition, the government and education stakeholders need to provide training and leadership development programs for school principals to support the achievement of the Education SDGs targets. Further research is also suggested to add other variables such as organizational culture, teacher competence, and learning innovation in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect the achievement of the SDGs in the field of education.

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AI (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE) USAGE STATEMENT

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1. Assist in the exploration of concepts and theories related to transformational leadership and educational SDGs.
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