

Transformational Leadership in Remote Schools: Integrating Local Cultural Values and Stakeholder Collaboration for Educational Improvement

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Abstract

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The transformation of school leadership in remote areas plays a strategic role in overcoming limitations in access, resources, and educational facilities. As an archipelago with geographic isolation, the country faces significant challenges that affect the quality of learning and teacher professionalism. This study aims to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership through the formulation of contextual vision and mission, strengthening teacher motivation and commitment, and building collaboration with stakeholders. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and then analyzed thematically. The findings show that school principals formulated adaptive, realistic, and inspiring visions by integrating local potential and coping strategies to address limitations. Teacher motivation and commitment increased through empowerment, positive reinforcement, emotional support, and role modeling. Furthermore, collaboration with the community, government, and external stakeholders strengthened legitimacy and resource availability. These findings confirm that transformational leadership is both practical and effective in improving educational quality in remote areas. The study also highlights the importance of context-sensitive leadership in addressing the unique challenges schools face in these areas. Therefore, this research recommends leadership training grounded in local wisdom for school principals, increased facility support and incentives from local governments, and strengthened collaboration among schools, communities, and stakeholders to maximize the utilization of available resources.

Kata Kunci:

Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Kearifan Lokal, Kolaborasi Stakeholder

Abstrak.

Transformasi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah di daerah terpencil berperan strategis dalam mengatasi keterbatasan akses, sumber daya, dan fasilitas pendidikan. Sebagai wilayah kepulauan dengan isolasi geografis, daerah terpencil menghadapi tantangan signifikan yang memengaruhi mutu pembelajaran dan profesionalisme guru. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi kepemimpinan transformasional melalui perumusan visi-misi kontekstual, penguatan motivasi dan komitmen guru, serta kolaborasi dengan pemangku kepentingan. Menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus, data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah mampu merumuskan visi-misi yang adaptif, realistis, dan inspiratif dengan mengintegrasikan potensi lokal serta strategi untuk mengatasi keterbatasan. Motivasi dan komitmen guru meningkat melalui pemberdayaan, penguatan positif, dukungan emosional, dan keteladanan. Selain itu, kolaborasi dengan masyarakat, pemerintah, dan pemangku kepentingan eksternal memperkuat legitimasi serta ketersediaan sumber daya. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional terbukti praktis dan efektif dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di daerah terpencil. Penelitian ini juga menyoroti pentingnya kepemimpinan yang sensitif terhadap konteks dalam mengatasi tantangan unik yang dihadapi oleh

sekolah-sekolah di daerah tersebut. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan pelatihan kepemimpinan berbasis kearifan lokal bagi kepala sekolah, peningkatan dukungan fasilitas serta insentif dari pemerintah daerah, dan penguatan kolaborasi antara sekolah, masyarakat, serta pemangku kepentingan untuk memaksimalkan pemanfaatan sumber daya yang ada.

INTRODUCTION

Transforming principal leadership in remote areas is a strategic approach to addressing educational challenges, including limited access to resources and learning facilities. As an archipelago, Simeulue faces geographic isolation that hinders the quality of its education. Teachers also experience limited professionalism due to a lack of training. Principals are required to perform beyond administrative duties to serve as agents of change. The potential of local wisdom must be leveraged to support education. (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Khorsandi et al., 2024). Recent literature confirms that transformational leadership significantly improves educational quality, particularly in contexts with structural challenges. As explained by Bass & Riggio, Transformational leadership focuses on motivating, inspiring, and empowering followers to achieve shared goals, thereby transforming an organization by creating strong emotional bonds between the leader and team members (Leithwood & Sun, 2017). In remote areas, transformational leadership must be adapted to local social and cultural conditions to be more relevant and accepted by the community. In this regard, school principals not only play an administrative role but also work to create a vision grounded in local wisdom that emphasizes collaboration and social solidarity.

Previous research (Leithwood & Sun, 2017) has shown that transformational leadership is highly effective in increasing teacher motivation and student engagement, especially in schools facing resource limitations. They emphasize that the application of transformational leadership in remote areas must be grounded in strengthening collaboration among school leaders, teachers, students, and the community to enhance legitimacy and expand educational resources (Rasyid, 2018). This aligns with findings by (Ardinata & Susanto, 2019), who stated that transformational leadership that integrates local values, such as cooperation and respect, can drive more meaningful and sustainable change. Additionally, found that leadership grounded in local culture can strengthen a school's competitiveness in addressing educational challenges, particularly in areas with limited infrastructure (Jaenudin, 2024). Found that principals who apply a transformational style can significantly increase teacher and student motivation. Principal leadership plays a crucial role and influences teacher commitment; the success of school education is determined by the principal's ability to manage (Abas et al., 2024).

Although many previous studies have examined transformational leadership across various educational contexts, there remains a significant gap in its application in remote areas with unique geographic and social challenges. For example, Bass & Avolio argue that transformational leadership can inspire and empower followers to achieve shared goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). However, its application in remote areas with resource and infrastructure constraints has received little attention. Leithwood & Sun also emphasize the importance of collaboration in transformational leadership to enhance teacher and student engagement (Leithwood & Sun, 2017). However, their studies focus primarily on schools in urban or resource-rich contexts. Further research by Jaenudin indicates that collaboration with the community and external stakeholders is crucial for improving educational quality; however, its implementation in remote areas with limited access and resources remains underexplored. (Jaenudin, 2024). By integrating local wisdom and cultural values, as demonstrated by Ardinata & Susanto, this study aims to bridge these gaps by introducing a transformational leadership model grounded in local social and cultural values (Ardinata & Susanto, 2019).

This research addresses the existing gap by proposing that transformational leadership, when integrated with local values such as social solidarity, cooperation, and respect for elders, can enhance leadership effectiveness in remote schools. Thus, this study contributes to the development of transformational leadership theory by offering a more adaptive perspective that considers local social and cultural contexts and introducing a new framework that can be implemented in other remote schools facing similar challenges. Therefore, this research offers a new perspective on how local cultural values can reinforce transformational leadership principles, thereby enhancing educational quality and strengthening social relationships within the school environment.

The study proposes that integrating local wisdom into transformational leadership practices can foster a more sustainable and inclusive educational ecosystem, particularly in remote areas with resource constraints (Ardinata & Susanto, 2019; Jaenudin, 2024; Leithwood & Sun, 2017). By aligning leadership strategies with the cultural context, principals can foster greater community involvement, motivate teachers, and ensure that the school's vision resonates deeply with its members. This approach will enable other remote schools facing similar challenges to adopt this model, ultimately improving educational outcomes and the more effective use of available resources. The goal of this research is to provide a replicable framework that demonstrates how a culturally grounded leadership model can address both educational and social challenges in geographically isolated regions.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. This research type was chosen to explore the phenomenon of transformational leadership in remote schools in depth and holistically. The study focuses on the school principal, who plays a key role in implementing transformational leadership within the school. The research was conducted in two junior high schools in Simeulue Regency, an area with unique geographic and social challenges, and data were collected in 2025 (Moleong, 2017). The study's informants include principals, teachers, school staff, and external stakeholders such as parents and local government representatives, all of whom play roles in educational collaboration. The selection of these informants is highly relevant to understanding how various stakeholders contribute to the success of transformational leadership, particularly in resource-constrained contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Data for this study were collected through various techniques, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, parents, and other relevant stakeholders to gather their perspectives on the application of transformational leadership and its impact on the school. Participant observation was conducted to directly observe leadership interactions and dynamics within the school, providing a real-time view of leadership practices (Yin, 2009). Document analysis was conducted on school vision and mission statements, annual work programs, activity reports, and relevant regional education policies (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data reduction was carried out by transcribing interview results, recording observations, and organizing the collected documents. The reduced data were then verified through source triangulation to ensure the validity of the information. Following this, the data were analyzed thematically using the outlined steps, including identifying key patterns, categorizing the findings,

and constructing a descriptive narrative that illustrates the relationships among the themes within the context of transformational leadership in these schools (Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Formulating a Contextual Vision and Mission

In the observation results, the principal of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah successfully formulated a vision and mission that were highly relevant to the local conditions of the coastal community. The school's meaningful yet straightforward vision focuses on fostering independence and cooperation, reflecting the strong values of mutual assistance within the local fishing community. This is clearly reflected in the school's official documents, where the vision is prominently displayed in the main room, thereby demonstrating the principal's commitment to integrating local values into the school's strategic direction. One teacher at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah expressed that the school's vision not only prioritizes achievement but also aims to shape students' character to prepare them for the challenges of life in a remote area, emphasizing that this vision is deeply relevant to their daily lives as part of the coastal community.

On the other hand, at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, the process of formulating the vision and mission was conducted in a more participatory manner, involving stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and student representatives. The principal there invited all stakeholders to collaborate in developing the school's vision and mission, resulting in a stronger sense of collective responsibility across the entire school community. In an interview, the principal explained that involving multiple parties in the formulation of this vision created a sense of ownership, making its implementation more effective. One teacher at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur also noted that they felt more enthusiastic about implementing the vision because the process was inclusive, fostering an emotional bond and collective spirit in carrying out the school's mission. This participation not only enhanced ownership but also strengthened the shared purpose within the school community.

Research findings indicate that the principal of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah has successfully formulated a vision and mission that is not only ideal but also relevant to the local conditions of the coastal community. This simple vision, focused on independence and cooperation, reflects the spirit of building student character in accordance with local culture. This vision is not merely discourse, but is embodied in official school documents and prominently displayed in the main room. The values of cooperation, independence, and concern for the coastal environment are key pillars, fully supported by teachers, who are closely connected to their lives. One teacher stated that the school's vision is not only about achievement but also about developing children's attitudes so that they are prepared to face the realities of life in remote areas. This support demonstrates the alignment between the principal's ideas and daily practice. Thus, the vision of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah serves as a practical guideline, not merely a formality, and demonstrates a concrete form of transformational leadership grounded in local values.

Meanwhile, at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, the development of the vision and mission was carried out in a more participatory manner. The principal invited teachers, parents, and student representatives to convene to formulate the mission. This created a strong sense of involvement among the entire school community. In interviews, the principal emphasized that multi-stakeholder participation fostered a sense of responsibility among all participants. As a result, the vision and mission that emerged from the joint discussions were more easily accepted by the entire

school community. A teacher confirmed the benefits, stating that they were more enthusiastic about implementing the vision.

Table 1. Interview Results of Research on Formulating School Vision and Mission

Indicator	Informant	Explanation
Formulating a Contextual Vision and Mission	Principal of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (HK-36)	Our vision is not lofty but instead focused on fostering independence and cooperation, in keeping with the culture of the local fishing community.
	Principal of Teupah Tengah 1 Middle School (HK-36)	The values of cooperation, independence, and concern for the coastal environment are the main pillars of the school's vision.
	Teacher at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (RD-42)	The school's vision feels close to our lives. It is not only about achievement but also about shaping children's attitudes.
	Teacher at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (YU-32)	We feel more guided because the vision was designed with island conditions in mind, not merely to imitate city schools.
	Principal of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SF-54)	We invited teachers, parents, and student representatives to convene to develop the school's mission. In this way, everyone feels involved and accountable.
	Teacher of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (AR-59)	We are more enthusiastic because the vision emerged from a shared discussion rather than from a directive from leadership.
	Parents of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SK-45)	We were happy to be involved because the school's mission finally aligns with our hope of preparing the children for life in coastal areas.

Source: Field observations (Researcher)

The documentation findings from SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah indicate that the principal's vision and mission are highly consistent with the local values of the coastal community. In the school's vision and mission documents, there is a clear emphasis on values such as independence, cooperation, and environmental awareness, which are integral to students' daily lives and to the local community. This documentation also reveals that the school's vision is not only printed in official documents but is prominently displayed in the main room as a symbol of the principal's commitment to integrating local values into the school's policies and programs. The observed annual work program documentation also indicates that various school activities, such as student exhibitions and community engagement events, align to foster character grounded in these local values.

At SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, the documentation findings show a more inclusive approach to formulating the vision and mission. The documented minutes of the vision and mission formulation meetings involving teachers, parents, and student representatives indicate that this process was not merely a formal administrative task but a genuine effort to strengthen the involvement of all school members. This participatory approach is reflected in documents that record group discussions and collective decision-making, which were subsequently translated into annual programs that prioritize collaboration among all stakeholders. Activity reports and photographic documentation of school events, such as parent-teacher meetings, also demonstrate

a strong connection between the formulated vision and its implementation. This further demonstrates that the collaboratively developed school vision is well-founded and widely accepted, which supports its more effective implementation.

Improving Teacher Motivation and Commitment

The second aspect found in this study is that the principal's strategy for increasing teacher motivation and commitment in schools in Simeulue Regency is heavily influenced by a transformational leadership approach. At SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah, teacher empowerment is a key step, providing teachers with the space to participate in the design of learning and innovation, rather than simply carrying out instructions. This fosters self-confidence and ownership of the learning process. Documentation of activities such as the P5 Work Exhibition demonstrates the high level of teacher creativity resulting from this active participation. Furthermore, emotional support has proven crucial, as demonstrated at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur. The principal provides a space for teachers to share their concerns, maintains personal communication, and demonstrates concern for teachers' family life. These actions strengthen emotional bonds and help maintain teachers' psychological resilience amid geographical challenges and limited resources, while also fostering a more harmonious and productive work environment.

Another strategy that has a significant impact is providing meaningful yet straightforward recognition. Principals often publicly acknowledge teachers in formal settings, such as by mentioning outstanding teachers to parents, which positively affects teachers' image in the community. This kind of recognition, although non-material, increases teacher enthusiasm and loyalty to the school. The principal's exemplary behavior also strengthens teacher motivation. As exemplified at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, the principal demonstrates discipline and religiosity through concrete actions, such as arriving before teachers and actively participating in religious activities. This exemplary behavior inspires teachers and students and fosters a positive school culture. Thus, the combination of empowerment strategies, emotional support, recognition, and role modeling complements these approaches in fostering a work environment that sustains the continued growth of teacher motivation and commitment, particularly in addressing the challenges of education in remote areas.

Table 2. Interview Results of Research on Improving Teacher Motivation and Commitment

Indicator	Informant	Explanation
Improving Teacher Motivation and Commitment	Principal of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (HK-36)	We provide space for teachers to participate in the design of learning and innovation, rather than merely carrying out instructions.
	Teacher at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (RD-42)	We were invited to discuss and were given the freedom to try new methods, which increased our confidence.
	Principal of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SF-54)	Teachers here are often exhausted due to the distance and limited facilities, so we always provide a space for them to share their concerns so they do not feel alone.
	Teacher of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (HH-38)	The principal often asks about our family. It is a small gesture, but it means a lot.
	Parents of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (SL-40)	We often hear the principal praise the teachers in front of parents, which increases our respect for them.

Teacher at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (YU-32)	Even if it is only a thank-you, it motivates us to keep trying.
Teacher of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (AR-59)	We are motivated because the principal himself sets an example of discipline and piety, not merely issuing orders.
Parents of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SK-45)	Our children are more diligent because they see the principal directly supervising them, not just the teachers.

Source: Field Data Collection, 2025

The interview findings on improving teacher motivation and commitment at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah indicate that the principal employs various strategies to empower teachers and enhance their work enthusiasm. One of the principal's main strategies was to provide teachers with opportunities to participate actively in lesson planning and innovation. As one teacher explained, being given the freedom to innovate in teaching methods boosted their confidence and encouraged creativity in their teaching. Teachers also felt valued as they were allowed to contribute ideas to the development of school activities. Additionally, emotional support from the principal was noted as a key factor, with teachers feeling cared for both professionally and personally. This was reflected in frequent communication between the principal and the teachers, which fostered closer and more supportive relationships.

At SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, strategies to enhance teacher motivation and commitment were implemented through positive reinforcement and meaningful yet straightforward recognition. The principal regularly publicly acknowledged outstanding teachers, which boosted their morale and sense of pride. As one teacher at SMPN 7 stated, simple forms of recognition, such as thanking teachers in front of parents, had a significant positive impact on their morale. Furthermore, the principal set an example in discipline and religious conduct, such as arriving early and actively participating in religious activities at the school. This exemplary behavior not only inspired teachers to model positive conduct but also fostered a harmonious and supportive work environment. Through these approaches, both schools successfully enhanced teacher motivation and commitment, despite existing limitations, thereby fostering a more productive and enthusiastic work environment.

Figure 2. One of the Improving Teacher Motivation Activities at School



Source: Field Data Collection, 2025

The documentation from both SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah and SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur is highly relevant to the interview findings on improving teacher motivation and commitment. At SMPN 1, the annual program documents indicate that teachers are given opportunities to contribute to the design of learning activities and innovations, aligning with the empowerment strategies discussed by the principal and teachers in the interviews. Additionally, activity reports

and photo documentation highlight the public recognition of outstanding teachers, reflecting the positive reinforcement mentioned in the interviews. At SMPN 7, documentation of religious activities and teacher discipline supports the finding that the principal's exemplary behavior, as evidenced by photographs of religious events, plays a significant role in fostering teacher motivation and enthusiasm. Therefore, this documentation strengthens the interview findings, demonstrating consistency between the practices implemented and the motivation created among teachers.

Building Collaboration with Stakeholders

The third dimension of transformational leadership is evident in the principal's ability to build collaboration with stakeholders. At SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah, collaboration was evident during the launch of a student-authored book and the P5 Work Exhibition. The event was held in the school complex and was attended by the Vice Regent, the Head of the Education Office, and the Sub-district Head. The presence of regional officials provided strong legitimacy that the school received full government support. The principal emphasized that this collaboration was concrete evidence of the synergy between education and the government. A teacher added that the officials' arrival made them feel more valued. Direct appreciation from external stakeholders also increased teacher and student motivation. The photo documentation displayed showed meaningful moments of togetherness. This served as a potent symbol that education at this school does not occur in isolation. The presence of stakeholders strengthened community trust in the school. This collaboration built external legitimacy, supporting the sustainability of the education program.

Meanwhile, at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, stakeholder collaboration is implemented in a more varied manner. The school involves the Simeulue Police Traffic Directorate to lead routine ceremonies. The principal stated that this aims to set a disciplined example for students. A teacher noted that the presence of police officers has increased order. Parents feel more at ease because their children receive direct guidance from officers. Parents are also proud to see the school working with the police. This collaboration enhances students' prestige and builds community trust. Furthermore, at boarding schools, parental involvement is significant. They are committed to supporting the tahfiz program and other extracurricular activities. This multi-stakeholder participation gives the school a strong collective energy. Thus, stakeholder collaboration strengthens a disciplined and religious school climate.

This demonstrates that synergy among the school, officers, and parents is a crucial foundation for creating high-quality, character-based education, as confirmed by the interview results in the table below.

Table 3. Interview Results of Research on Building Collaboration with Stakeholders

Indicator	Informant	Explanation
Building Collaboration with Stakeholders	Principal of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (HK-36)	The presence of the Deputy Regent, the Head of the Education Office, and the Sub-district Head at the book launch and the P5 Work Exhibition demonstrates the government's full support for this school.
	Teacher at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (YU-32)	We felt more appreciated because local officials visited the children's work in person.

Principal of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SF-54)	We deliberately engaged the police as ceremony instructors to ensure that students set a disciplined example.
Teacher of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (HH-36)	The presence of police officers makes students more orderly, and parents feel even more at ease because their children are being guided directly by officers.
Parents of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SK-45)	We are proud that the school is willing to collaborate with the police; it adds to the children's prestige.
Parents of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah (SL-40)	We feel like this school is open and willing to listen to our input.
Principal of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (SF-54)	We continue to communicate with the education office to provide teacher training and additional learning resources.
Teacher of SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur (AR-59)	Our school has benefited greatly from government training. Although it is simple, it has broadened our horizons.

Source: Field Data Collection, 2025

The interview findings on Building Collaboration with Stakeholders reveal that principals have successfully fostered cooperation with internal and external stakeholders to strengthen educational programs in their schools. At SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah, the principal emphasized the importance of collaboration with local government officials, as evidenced by events such as the student book launch and the P5 Work Exhibition. The interview with the principal and teachers confirmed that the presence of regional officials not only conferred legitimacy but also positively affected teacher motivation, making teachers feel appreciated. As one teacher noted, seeing local officials attend school events made them feel that their efforts were valued, reinforcing the idea that external collaboration enhances both school legitimacy and resource availability.

At SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, collaboration with external stakeholders, such as the police and local community leaders, was emphasized. The principal mentioned involving the police in school ceremonies as a means of instilling discipline, a practice confirmed by interviews with teachers and parents. One teacher explained that the police's involvement made students more orderly, and parents felt more comfortable knowing their children were being guided directly by officers. Additionally, parental involvement in extracurricular activities further strengthened the sense of community and shared responsibility for supporting the school's mission. These findings, supported by the interviews, demonstrate the crucial role of building partnerships with stakeholders in enhancing school performance and fostering a collaborative environment that improves educational outcomes.

Figure 3. The Deputy Regent of Simeulue and other Officials Attended the P5 Work Exhibition



Source: Field Data Collection, 2025

The documentation from SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah and SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur is highly relevant to the findings on Building Collaboration with Stakeholders. At SMPN 1, documentation related to the student book launch and the P5 Work Exhibition indicates active involvement by regional officials, including the Deputy Regent, the Head of the Education Office, and the Sub-district Head, thereby providing legitimacy and support to the school. Photos and activity reports illustrate the active participation of external parties, reinforcing collaboration with the school and demonstrating that external stakeholder involvement provides additional motivation for both teachers and students.

At SMPN 7, documentation of the police's involvement in school ceremonies and other regular activities shows the collaboration between the school and government institutions. This is further reflected in photographs and activity reports, which illustrate how the presence of police officers at school events helps instill discipline among students and increases parents' sense of security and trust in the school. These documents strengthen the interview findings, demonstrating that collaboration with external stakeholders, such as government officials and community members, is essential to sustaining educational programs and improving school performance.

DISCUSSION

Adapting Leadership Vision to Local Contexts

Transformational leadership is an approach that emphasizes vision, inspiration, motivation, and empowerment in educational organizations. Various studies have shown that this leadership style plays a significant role in improving learning quality and teacher performance. (Bass & Riggio, 2006) Explain that principals who implement transformational leadership build a collaborative culture and increase student motivation. (Bass & Riggio, 2006) Found that applying transformational principles in vocational schools strengthens Total Quality Management-based learning. (Bass & Riggio, 2006) Emphasize the importance of inspirational motivation through a meaningful vision to increase teacher and student engagement, while intellectual stimulation encourages teacher creativity. (Bass & Riggio, 2006) Moreover, individualized consideration strengthens teacher loyalty and professional commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The results of the study indicate that the principals of SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah and SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur succeeded in formulating a contextual vision and mission that is relevant to the social, cultural, and geographical conditions of Simeulue, where schools in remote areas often face limited facilities, difficult transportation access, and unique community characteristics. The formulated vision is not merely copied from national documents but is adapted to the community's real needs. (Bass & Riggio, 2006) Emphasized that inspirational motivation, as one dimension of transformational leadership, functions to move the organization through a clear, contextual, and inspiring shared vision. Transformational leadership significantly influences employee motivation and performance, and job satisfaction significantly influences motivation (Fridajani & Suyanto, 2025). In line with that, ((Nurfahila & Yuliana, 2024) Proved that a participatory vision encourages consistent implementation because it creates a sense of ownership among all school members.

A deeper analysis of the findings reveals the significant role of inspirational motivation within the principal's leadership. The vision at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah, which emphasizes cooperation and independence, reflects an understanding and empathy for the local fishing culture, deeply rooted in community solidarity (Allen et al., 1999). This vision aligns with the principles of transformational leadership, as proposed, which asserts that leaders inspire and motivate followers

by creating a vision that resonates emotionally. In this case, the principal's leadership is not solely directed toward administrative goals (Tsai et al., 2019). However, it focuses on fostering a shared sense of purpose grounded in local values, thereby bridging the gap between institutional expectations and community culture. On the other hand, at SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, the vision formulation process actively involves multiple stakeholders, teachers, students, and parents, reinforcing the inclusivity and participatory nature of transformational leadership. (Parry, 1999).

The inclusive approach observed in both schools challenges the traditional view of vision-making as a top-down, bureaucratic process, positioning it instead as a dynamic and relational activity. In SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah, the vision's focus on local independence cultivates student confidence despite limited resources by maintaining a sense of collective energy and cooperation (Cairns et al., 1998; Silverthorne & Wang, 2001). This reflects Hersey & Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, where leaders adjust their strategies based on the specific needs and characteristics of the community they serve. Meanwhile, at SMPN 7, the involvement of teachers, students, and parents in shaping the vision facilitates a sense of shared ownership, further cementing the mission's relevance and sustainability (Kempson, 2013; Phipps, 1988). This approach confirms that transformational leadership, when grounded in a local cultural context, becomes a powerful tool for social and educational change.

Developing a contextual school vision and mission is the first step in implementing the principal's managerial skills. A vision aligned with school conditions and local potential can provide strategic direction for all management activities. (Rahmat & Sirojuddin, 2025). The principal plays a crucial role in developing an adaptive and inspiring vision that enables all school members to share a goal of improving educational quality. The principal's implementation of managerial skills encompasses planning, organizing through teamwork, field implementation, and evaluation of all management activities. The diverse aspects of managerial competence require the principal to continuously develop and implement effective strategies to achieve optimal and sustainable managerial mastery (Fridajani & Suyanto, 2025). The principal needs to foster a collaborative and reflective work culture to ensure all programs are aligned with the school's vision. As an agent of change, the principal encourages innovation and teacher professional development to achieve sustainable educational quality (Sirojuddin & Pramitha, 2025).

Enhancing Teacher Engagement and Dedication

In the educational context, the principal serves as the primary leader who determines the organization's direction. Transformational principals not only manage administration but must also lead changes in school culture and practice. (Raharja et al., 2022) Showed that transformational leadership has a significant impact on teacher performance, mainly when supported by a healthy organizational culture. Principal leadership plays a crucial role in achieving educational goals; principals must be responsible for directing and managing the various aspects that support school progress (Wuryandoko et al., 2025). (Nurfahila & Yuliana, 2024) Found that principal strategies such as training, regular meetings, and teacher involvement in decision-making strengthen collective leadership in schools. Transformational leadership is the most effective leadership style for fostering positive change and achieving organizational success (Aprilianto et al., 2025; Muniandy et al., 2024).

Teachers are key actors in determining the successful implementation of a school's vision and mission. However, teachers in remote areas face significant challenges: limited facilities, long

journeys from home to school, and feelings of isolation from the center of educational development. This study shows that principals can maintain teacher motivation and commitment by applying transformational leadership. This keeps teachers enthusiastic about fulfilling their strategic roles despite constraints. Within the theoretical framework (Bass & Avolio, 1994), this practice is closely related to the dimension of individualized consideration, in which leaders pay particular attention to teachers' emotional, psychological, and professional needs. Principals must be effective leaders who can influence school members to achieve organizational goals in positive ways, accelerate change through strong personal qualities, inspire subordinates, and realize the organizational vision (Permata et al., 2024).

Field findings reveal four main strategies employed by principals. *First*, empowering teachers through active involvement in school program planning. In this way, teachers are not merely policy implementers but creative actors who make a real contribution to the direction of school development (Türk & Korkmaz, 2022). *Second*, providing emotional support, both in the form of concern for teachers' families and attention to their psychological well-being, is crucial for reducing stress levels caused by limited resources, and *Third*, providing positive reinforcement through meaningful yet straightforward forms of appreciation. (Soebiartika & Rindaningsih, 2023) Demonstrated that appreciation, even in small forms, can increase teacher job satisfaction and loyalty. *Fourth*, the principal's exemplary behavior in terms of discipline, integrity, and work ethic. These concrete examples serve as direct inspiration for teachers to emulate positive behavior. Thus, these strategies create a school ecosystem conducive to the growth of teacher motivation and commitment (Kartiko et al., 2024; Kim & Kim, 2025; Sánchez-Jarque et al., 2023).

The research findings show that the transformational leadership of principals in Simeulue Regency significantly increased teacher motivation and commitment through empowerment strategies, emotional support, positive reinforcement, and role modeling (Leithwood & Sun, 2017; Yang, 2014). Empowerment involves teachers in learning planning and innovation, fostering a sense of ownership and self-confidence, particularly in remote areas with limited resources. Emotional support through open communication and concern for teacher well-being helps maintain psychological resilience while strengthening interpersonal relationships. Positive reinforcement, such as verbal appreciation and simple awards, increases teacher morale and loyalty (Mansor et al., 2021; Yang, 2014). The principal's exemplary discipline and dedication inspire teachers to emulate positive values in the teaching and learning process. This approach fosters a collaborative and inspiring work environment that is relevant to the educational context in remote areas. This combination of strategies sustainably strengthens teachers' intrinsic motivation. (Afshari et al., 2012).

Strengthening Partnerships for Educational Success

The success of schools in remote areas cannot be supported solely by internal actors such as principals and teachers. Given limited resources, external stakeholder support is urgently needed. The results of this study indicate that principals in Simeulue can build effective multi-stakeholder collaboration. From the perspective of (Bass & Riggio, 2006) This principal's ability reflects the dimension of idealized influence, namely, serving as a role model who unites and mobilizes collective support. (Wijayanti & Sugianto, 2024) Emphasized that stakeholder involvement serves as a mediator, strengthening the relationship between transformational leadership and improved school performance. Multi-stakeholder collaboration in Simeulue is evident in various forms. (Mariage & Garmon, 2003).

Community leaders actively support academic and nonacademic activities, underscoring the school's vital role in the community. This collaboration expands access to resources, both physical facilities and social capital (Officer et al., 2013). Community support also enhances students' self-confidence by fostering a sense of care. Stakeholder involvement strengthens the legitimacy of the principal's leadership through cross-sectoral support. A collaborative culture involving teachers, parents, and the community plays a crucial role in enhancing educational innovation. Ideally, education should also foster attitudes and habits that support peace, truth, morality, and ethical behavior in the learning environment. (Hasibuan & Bahri, 2018; Pabbajah et al., 2020). The distinctive contribution of this research is the integration of local cultural values into transformational leadership practices in remote schools.

These findings reinforce the view that transformational principal leadership is a key factor in improving educational quality. One essential element of transformational leadership is the ability to foster collaboration with diverse stakeholders. (Windasari et al., 2024) Emphasized that the existence of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) strengthens the influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance. Through collaboration, teachers can share best practices, build professional networks, and enhance educational innovation. School partnerships with the community and government are crucial in strengthening educational resource support. Transformational principles do not work in isolation; instead, they function as collaborative facilitators that unite teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. (Inayah et al., 2024; Nor & Suriyansyah, 2024). With this strategy, schools can address limitations in both facilities and human resources more adaptively and productively.

The study revealed that teamwork has a positive influence on improving teacher performance. Furthermore, teachers' self-efficacy has been shown to directly contribute to their performance. Other findings indicate that teamwork strengthens teachers' self-efficacy, thereby supporting one another in improving the effectiveness and quality of their work within the school environment (Hasibuan & Bahri, 2018; Pabbajah et al., 2020). In line with these findings, efforts to foster collaboration with school stakeholders in Simeulue, grounded in local wisdom, are crucial. Local values such as cooperation, togetherness, and respect can strengthen the synergy between principals, teachers, the community, and the local government (Díaz-Gibson et al., 2014; Spoth et al., 2008). This culturally grounded collaboration not only strengthens commitment and a sense of belonging but also fosters a harmonious and productive work environment that supports improvements in educational quality in remote areas. Thus, applying local wisdom values in school leadership can become a strong foundation for sustainable educational transformation in Simeulue (Rosodor & Putra, 2025; Tran, 2014).

Table 4. Summarizing The Contributions and Novelty of the Research

Aspect	Explanation
Theory Used	Transformational Leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) focuses on empowerment, motivation, inspiration, and collaboration to achieve shared goals.
Contributions of the Study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of Theory: This study expands the understanding of transformational leadership by adapting leadership principles to the context of remote areas. 2. Practical Application:

	It demonstrates how applying transformational leadership can improve educational quality in remote schools by integrating local cultural values and community collaboration.
Novelty of the Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration of Local Values: The study shows that transformational leadership, when combined with local cultural values such as social solidarity and respect for elders, is highly effective in addressing challenges in remote areas. 2. Collaboration with Stakeholders: It underscores the importance of collaboration among schools, the government, and the community in sustaining educational programs. This aspect has not been widely explored in prior research on remote areas.
Comparison with Previous Studies	Most previous studies on transformational leadership have focused on urban contexts or areas with abundant resources. This research offers a new perspective by adapting this leadership model to contexts with greater constraints and requiring community-based approaches.

Source: Data Collection, 2025

This table summarizes the research contributions and novelty, emphasizing the application of transformational leadership theory in remote areas, the integration of local cultural values, and the importance of collaboration with diverse stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the principals at SMPN 1 Teupah Tengah and SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur successfully formulated visions and missions that were highly relevant to the local context, integrating local cultural values into their leadership strategies. To improve teacher motivation and commitment, the principals employed empowerment, positive reinforcement, and emotional support, which proved effective in fostering a more productive and harmonious work environment. Additionally, collaboration with external stakeholders, such as the government and the community, was crucial to strengthening the schools' legitimacy and enhancing resource availability to sustain educational programs. Overall, transformational leadership grounded in local values and stakeholder collaboration was effective in improving educational quality in remote areas.

However, this study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the sample comprised only two schools in Simeulue Regency, so the findings may not be generalizable to other remote areas with different conditions. Second, this study employed a qualitative descriptive approach relying on interviews, observations, and document analysis, which, while providing in-depth insights, did not yield quantitative data suitable for broad testing. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger, more diverse sample and to employ a mixed-methods approach to gather more comprehensive data. Additionally, future studies could explore the role of other factors, such as gender or cultural background, in influencing the effectiveness of transformational leadership in remote schools.

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