

Transformational Leadership and Its Impact on Teachers' Professional Competence

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership on teachers' professional competence. The study was conducted using a literature review method by collecting, reviewing, and synthesizing various relevant scientific sources related to transformational leadership and teacher professional development. The research process included topic identification, literature search and selection, and systematic data analysis. The results indicate that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teachers' professional competence, particularly in improving learning quality, teacher motivation, collaboration, creativity, and continuous professional development. Principals who implement transformational leadership are able to create supportive and adaptive learning environments that encourage teachers to improve their competencies continuously. This finding implies the importance of the principal's role in supporting teacher professionalism and improving the quality of education continuously.

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education is a strategic issue in facing the demands of the 21st century, which emphasizes mastery of critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills. In this context, teachers play a crucial role as the primary implementers of the learning process. Therefore, teacher professional competence is a key factor in determining educational success. This competence encompasses not only mastery of teaching materials but also the ability to design innovative learning, utilize technology, and engage in continuous self-development. However, research conducted by (Elan, 2022) indicates that many teachers still lack the skills to develop their professionalism sustainably through reflective practice.

One factor suspected of influencing the improvement of teacher professional competence is the principal's leadership. In practice, school leadership still tends to focus on administrative aspects and has not fully acted as an agent of change capable of encouraging the development of teacher potential. Effective leadership, however, should be able to create a supportive, collaborative work environment that is oriented towards quality improvement. In this regard, transformational leadership is a relevant approach because it emphasizes profound and systemic change through inspiration, empowerment, and the formation of new values (Nadeak, 2025, p. 96).

In addition, the rapid development of educational technology in the 21st century requires teachers to continuously improve their professional competence. Teachers are expected not only to master subject materials but also to integrate technology into the learning process, create innovative learning environments, and adapt to changes in students' learning characteristics. However, not all teachers are able to adapt quickly to these educational changes, making support from school leadership increasingly important. Research conducted by Syafira (2024) states that the transformational leadership of school principals has a positive impact on teacher professionalism, indicating that transformational leadership plays a significant role in improving teacher professional competence. However, most research still focuses on general aspects of teacher performance and has not specifically examined its relationship to the dimensions of teacher professional competence.

Although various studies have discussed transformational leadership and teacher performance, studies specifically examining its influence on teachers' professional competence remain limited. Most previous research focused more on general teacher performance and school effectiveness rather than on the development of teachers' professional competence in learning innovation and technology integration. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze more deeply the impact of transformational leadership on teachers' professional competence.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze in more depth the impact of transformational leadership on teacher professional competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire and motivate to achieve sustainable development. According to Ng in (Nadeak, 2025, p. 96) transformational leadership has four main dimensions, including *inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation*. Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's ability to encourage teachers through vision, enthusiasm, and optimism in achieving educational goals. Principals who consistently provide motivation are able to increase teachers' confidence and commitment toward professional development.

Idealized influence reflects the leader's role as a role model for teachers. Principals who demonstrate integrity, discipline, and responsibility can positively influence teachers and encourage the improvement of their professionalism.

Individualized consideration emphasizes personal attention given by leaders to each teacher according to their needs and potential. Through this approach, principals are able to support teachers' professional growth more effectively.

Intellectual stimulation encourages teachers to think critically, creatively, and innovatively in solving educational problems. This dimension becomes increasingly important in the digital era because teachers are required to continuously adapt to educational changes and technological developments.

As leaders, principals play a strategic role in creating an environment that supports teacher quality improvement. Transformational leadership enables principals to encourage teachers to be more innovative, relevant, and open to change, particularly in facing the demands of 21st-century learning. Teachers will be motivated to develop their professional competencies with strong support, direction, and motivation.

Several previous studies have shown that transformational leadership has a positive influence on teachers' professional competence. This suggests that the better a principal's transformational leadership, the better their professional competence (Sulaeman, 2022).

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on teachers' professional competence.

Teacher Professional Competence Theory

Teacher professional competence is the ability related to mastery of material and the ability to develop the learning process. Teacher professional competence has three levels, namely; (1) *personal capability* where teachers are expected to have more adequate knowledge, skills and abilities, (2) *innovator* namely as educational staff who have commitment, (3) *developer* where teachers must have a broad vision of teaching and perspective (Ilyas, 2022).

Professional competence is one of the most important competencies that teachers must possess in carrying out the learning process effectively. Teachers with strong professional competence are able to master subject content, apply

appropriate teaching methods, utilize technology in learning, and evaluate student learning outcomes comprehensively.

In the context of 21st-century education, teachers are also expected to develop innovative and student-centered learning approaches. The integration of technology into education has become an important aspect of professional competence because digital learning environments require teachers to be adaptive, creative, and collaborative.

Improving teacher professional competence is inseparable from the role of the principal's environment, particularly the principal's leadership. Principals who play an active role as learning leaders are able to create a work climate that is conducive, collaborative, and open to teacher professional development (Sriana, Asilestari, & Wahyuni, 2025).

H2: Transformational leadership has a significant influence on improving teachers' professional competence.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative method with a literature review approach, conducted through the review, analysis, and synthesis of various relevant sources. Data were obtained from reliable and up-to-date journal articles, books, and scientific publications. The research process included topic identification, literature search and selection, and systematic analysis and compilation of findings.

The literature sources used in this study were obtained from scientific journals, books, and academic publications related to transformational leadership and teacher professional competence. The selected references were relevant, credible, and published in recent years to ensure the validity of the study.

The data collection process involved identifying related studies, selecting appropriate references, classifying important findings, and synthesizing the information systematically. Data were analyzed descriptively by comparing the findings of previous studies to identify patterns, similarities, and differences related to transformational leadership and teachers' professional competence.

Through this literature review approach, the researchers aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how transformational leadership contributes to improving teachers' professional competence in educational institutions.

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the results of the literature review, transformational leadership has been shown to have a positive influence on teacher professional competence, particularly in aspects of learning innovation and technology utilization. To clarify these findings, the following is a summary of previous research.

Table 1. Previous research

No.	Researchers	Method	Findings
1.	Gusmiati & Sulastri, 2023	Qualitative	Teachers' professional competence has been implemented well.
2.	Fitri, Kholida, & Permatasari, 2022	Qualitative	The principal's leadership style greatly determines the direction of the school's success.
3.	Triantoro, Mawardi, Aslamiah, & Cinantya, 2025	Literature Study	The principal's transformational leadership has a positive influence on improving teacher competence.
4.	Adien, Amjad, Marlina, & Karolina, 2024	Qualitative	Transformational leadership has a positive impact on school success, culture and teacher professionalism.
5.	Elviliza, Yulita, Gistituati, Rusdinal, & Nellitawati, 2025	Literature Study	Transformational leadership positively influences teacher performance through motivation, school culture, self-efficacy, and work climate.
6.	Siswadi, Yahya, Nuraziz, & Putri, 2025	Systematic Literature Review	Transformational leadership plays an important role in improving educational quality by creating innovative, inspiring, and supportive learning environments.
7.	Mochamad Nashrullah, Syaiful Rahman, Abdul Majid, Nunuk Hariyati, Budi Purwoko	Qualitative	Transformational leadership helps school leaders create adaptive and sustainable digital learning environments through innovation, effective communication, and technology integration.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that most of the research shows a positive influence of principal leadership on teacher professional competence. The research conducted by (Gusmiati & Sulastri, 2023) stated that teachers' professional competencies have been implemented well, as seen from the management and use of digital-based teaching media, mastery of teaching materials, implementation of student learning outcome evaluations, and management of teaching programs. Meanwhile, (Fitri, 2022) emphasized that principal leadership determines the direction of a school's success, where the principal's role is to provide strategic direction within the school system.

Principals develop standard curricula, assess teaching methods, monitor student achievement, encourage parent involvement, revise policies and procedures, manage budgets, hire and evaluate staff, and oversee facilities. Principals fully understand the importance of a positive school culture and how it can contribute to student achievement and professional growth within the school building.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that transformational leadership contributes to improving teachers' adaptability in facing educational changes. Teachers who receive continuous support and motivation from school principals tend to be more confident in implementing innovative learning strategies and integrating technology into classroom activities.

In addition, transformational leadership encourages teachers to participate actively in professional development activities such as training, workshops, and collaborative learning programs. This continuous development process contributes to improving the overall quality of education in schools.

Research (Triantoro, 2025) specifically shows that the principal's transformational leadership has a positive influence on improving teacher competency. This is in line with previous research conducted by (Adien, Amjad, Marlina, & Karolina, 2024) which states that transformational leadership not only impacts school success but also organizational culture and teacher professionalism.

Research conducted by (Elviliza, 2025) also found that transformational leadership positively influences teacher performance through factors such as motivation, school culture, self-efficacy, and work climate. This finding indicates that transformational leadership contributes not only to teacher competence but also to creating a supportive educational environment. Furthermore, research by (Siswadi, 2025) showed that transformational leadership plays an important role in improving educational quality by creating innovative, inspiring, and supportive learning environments. This leadership style encourages positive changes within educational institutions and supports continuous professional development among teachers.

Another study showed that transformational leadership plays an important role in supporting digital transformation in schools. School leaders who apply transformational leadership are able to encourage innovation, technology integration, and active teacher participation in creating adaptive learning environments. This finding indicates that transformational leadership is highly relevant in facing educational challenges in the digital era (Nashrullah, 2025).

Overall, these findings indicate that transformational leadership has a significant contribution in improving the professional competence of teachers, especially in encouraging innovation, self-development and improving the quality of learning.

DISCUSSION

The research results show that transformational leadership has a positive influence on teachers' professional competence. This finding aligns with the leadership theory proposed by Ng in (Nadeak, 2025, p. 96) which emphasizes that

leaders are able to inspire, motivate, and encourage individual development through four main dimensions: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Principals who employ this leadership style tend to be able to create a work environment that supports teacher professional development.

The implementation of transformational leadership also contributes to creating a positive school culture. Principals who motivate and support teachers continuously can increase teachers' confidence, creativity, and willingness to adopt innovative learning methods. As a result, teachers become more prepared to face educational challenges in the digital era.

In addition, transformational leadership encourages collaboration among teachers and strengthens commitment toward achieving educational goals. Teachers who work in a supportive environment tend to show better professional development and greater motivation in improving the quality of learning. The findings of this study also indicate that transformational leadership is highly relevant in 21st-century education because schools require adaptive and innovative teachers who are able to integrate technology effectively into the learning process.

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research showing that transformational leadership plays a role in increasing learning innovation and teacher utilization of technology. This indicates that teachers who receive support, direction, and attention from the principal will be more motivated to develop their competencies. Previous studies also revealed that transformational leadership contributes to improving teacher motivation, self-efficacy, and collaborative work culture within schools. A supportive school environment enables teachers to develop their competencies continuously and adapt more effectively to educational changes and technological developments.

Previous studies also highlighted that transformational leadership supports digital transformation in educational institutions. Principals who implement transformational leadership are able to encourage teachers to integrate technology, participate actively in innovation, and adapt more effectively to changes in digital learning systems. This shows that transformational leadership not only improves teacher competence but also supports the sustainability of educational quality improvement in modern educational institutions.

Dimensions intellectual stimulation contribute to encouraging teachers to think critically and creatively, while the dimensions individualized consideration allow principals to pay special attention to the needs of each teacher, ensuring optimal competency development. Transformational leadership not only improves performance but also contributes to the ongoing improvement of teacher professionalism.

Furthermore, schools led by transformational principals tend to create more adaptive, collaborative, and innovative learning environments. This condition supports teachers in developing their professional skills continuously according to the demands of modern education. Therefore, the role of transformational leadership is increasingly important because teachers are required to adapt continuously to technological developments and changes in learning systems.

Principals who are able to inspire, motivate, and support teachers consistently can create a more innovative and collaborative learning environment.

Overall, the results of this study strengthen that transformational leadership is an important factor in improving teachers' professional competence, especially in facing the demands of 21st century education which emphasizes innovation, collaboration, and the use of technology.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that transformational leadership has a positive influence on teacher professional competence. Principals who implement transformational leadership are able to encourage teachers to improve their abilities in material mastery, learning innovation, and technology utilization. Transformational leadership also contributes to creating supportive, collaborative, and adaptive learning environments that help teachers face educational changes in the digital era. Intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration are important factors in enhancing teacher creativity, reflection, and self-development. Thus, transformational leadership plays a strategic role in continuously improving the quality of learning and teacher professionalism. In addition, transformational leadership becomes increasingly relevant in modern educational institutions that require innovative and adaptive teachers who are able to integrate technology effectively into the learning process.

These findings indicate that transformational leadership is not only important in improving teacher competence but also in creating a supportive educational environment. Principals are expected to consistently encourage innovation, collaboration, and continuous professional development among teachers. In addition, teachers are encouraged to continuously improve their competencies through training, collaboration, and technology integration in learning activities. Educational institutions also need to create a positive and supportive environment that promotes continuous learning and professional growth.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations can be made: principals are expected to consistently implement transformational leadership, and teachers are also expected to continuously develop their professional competencies through training, reflection, and the use of technology. Schools need to create a collaborative environment that supports teacher professional development. Future researchers are advised to examine other variables that may influence teacher professional competency or use different research methods for more comprehensive results

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research is recommended to examine transformational leadership by adding other variables such as work motivation, organizational culture, or teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, research could employ a quantitative approach with empirical data to strengthen the findings. Studies at different educational levels are also needed to gain a broader understanding of the influence of transformational leadership in education.

Future studies are also encouraged to examine transformational leadership in different educational contexts and levels, such as secondary schools and higher education institutions. In addition, future researchers may explore the relationship between transformational leadership and digital learning transformation in order to gain a broader understanding of educational leadership in the modern era.

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