



Embedding Character Education through Transformational Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Principal-Led Human Resource Development in an Indonesian Muhammadiyah Primary School Context

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the transformational leadership practices of elementary school principals in the context of human resource management, an area often overlooked compared to organizational or corporate settings. Conducted at an Indonesian Muhammadiyah Elementary School. This ethnographic qualitative research explores the cultural dynamics and leadership behaviors influencing the management of school personnel. Participants included the principal, curriculum coordinator, facilities staff, treasurer, teachers across grades I–VI, school employees, and grade VI students. Data were gathered through observation, interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed via data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the principal exhibits a blend of democratic, visionary, and semi-authoritarian leadership styles. Notably, transformational leadership was enacted through inspirational motivation and idealized influence, demonstrated via multimedia, storytelling, and structured spiritual routines. The principal communicated the school's vision and mission clearly, serving as a role model while initiating various human resource development initiatives—such as refining standard operating procedures (SOPs), enhancing teacher and staff competencies, improving academic performance, and expanding professional networks. The study underscores that the principal's effective transformational leadership significantly contributes to elevating teacher motivation, enthusiasm, achievement, and performance, ultimately enhancing the overall educational quality at the school.

Keywords: elementary school, human development resources, transformational leadership

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INTRODUCTION

Human Resources (HR) is a very crucial and necessary aspect to achieve the goals of an organization or company. Humans as resources are the most important component in an organization when compared to other resources such as capital or technology because humans are responsible for managing these factors (Husaini & Sutama, 2021). Human resources in school organizations include teachers, principals, vice principals, administrative staff, security officers, janitors, and counselling

guidance teachers. Studying human resources in schools is important because the cooperation of these components will bring about changes in schools as a common goal.

Human resource management in an organization can be classified into several functions, namely: 1) The planning function is the function of determining human resource management programs that will help achieve company goals. 2) Organizing Function: This is the function of preparing and forming an organization by designing structures and relationships between workers and tasks that must be done, including determining the division of tasks, authority, and responsibility. 3) The directing function is the function of encouraging workers to be able and able to work effectively and efficiently according to planned goals. 4) The controlling function is the function of measuring, supervising, and controlling the activities carried out to determine the extent to which the plans that have been set, especially in the field of labour, have been achieved (Husaini & Utama, [2021](#)).

Human resources in schools that are the focus of principal management are teachers and employees. Teachers are all people who have the authority and responsibility to guide and foster students (Pratama & Musthofa, [2019](#)). Meanwhile, employees are everyone who provides services (both in the form of thoughts and in the form of energy) and gets a reward or compensation whose amount has been determined in advance.

Principals have a strategic role in improving the quality of education in a school. The success of education in schools is mainly determined by the success of the principal in administering and strengthening all school members (Rosita et al., [2016](#)). An important factor to increase productivity, effectiveness, work efficiency, job satisfaction, and attitude is the leadership style or model in an organization (Nur et al., [2021](#)).

The transformational leadership model seeks to develop the aspects of leadership as a whole by demanding higher motivation and ideals and is based on the basic values that he believes in (Setiyaningtiyas & Hartutik, [2022](#)). Transformational management is related to clear vision and mission statements, the use of effective communication, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention to the individual problems of organizational members (Botutihe P et al., [2023](#)).

Leadership theory suggests that there are four dimensions of transformational leadership known as the “4-I” concept that distinguish it from other leadership styles. These dimensions include: 1) Idealized Influence refers to a leader's ability to exude charisma and power that makes him respected and respected by subordinates; 2) Inspirational Motivation includes how leaders generate high enthusiasm and enthusiasm in subordinates to achieve standards and even exceed them. 3) Intellectual stimulation: Leaders also encourage their coworkers to explore new methods of carrying out tasks and new opportunities to increase knowledge. 4) Individualized Consideration: Transformational leadership has a trait that is able to understand the differences and individual needs of subordinates as unique individuals (Botutihe P. et al., [2023](#)).

Another explanation of transformational leadership states that it is a leadership style that is able to influence subordinates so that they feel confident, proud, loyal, and respectful of organizational leaders (Marliyani et al., [2023](#)). In addition, they are also motivated to perform tasks and responsibilities beyond what is expected. In addition, transformational leadership refers to a way of leadership that is able to inspire followers to encourage and manage individual interests for the common good through intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and ideal influence so that followers strive to improve organizational performance (L. Akbar & Imaniyati, [2019](#)). Leaders who have transformational leadership traits are able to increase organizational commitment by inspiring and encouraging subordinates so that they can achieve better results in their performance (Efendi et al., [2023](#)).

Of the many types of principal leadership, researchers chose the transformational leadership type in this study because based on the synthesis of several definitions of transformational leadership, it has aspects and indicators that are in accordance with the research objectives, including 1) the leader's vision is clear and can motivate followers to achieve higher goals, 2) strong leader commitment to achieve goals, 3) the leader's ability to motivate and inspire followers to achieve higher goals, 4) leadership that builds trust and commitment, and 5) flexible leadership.

Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School Sragen has experienced very rapid development in terms of infrastructure, number of students, academic and non-academic achievements, human resources, and the quality of education in general. The number of students reached 1032, teachers and employees 97 people, with many achievements, both student and teacher achievements. The cohesiveness and cooperation of teachers and employees are very evident in every event and activity carried out by SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong. The enthusiasm of teachers and employees is also seen in every service at school; a conducive climate and school culture are also built at SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong. This is the reason for conducting research at the school. Researchers conducted research on the principal's ability to manage human resources, both teachers and employees at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School, with the concept of transformational leadership.

Previous research on transformational leadership has been conducted by Efendi et al. ([2023](#)), who examined the leadership of the principal of SD Birrul Walidain Muhammadiyah Kudus. The research focused on the principal's ability to inspire and stimulate teachers to foster learning creativity. The difference between this research and previous research lies in the focus of the problem under study. The novelty of this research is that it is able to comprehensively explore information related to the principal's transformational leadership in an effort to increase motivation, enthusiasm, achievement, and teacher performance as well as the quality of education at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School.

The objective of this research is to examine the application of transformational leadership by the principal in managing human resources and embedding character education in a Muhammadiyah

elementary school. The study seeks to answer the central question: How does transformational leadership influence human resource development and foster character education in the school setting? This research specifically explores how leadership styles—such as democratic, visionary, and semi-authoritarian approaches—are employed to navigate generational diversity among staff and to create a collaborative school culture. Additionally, it aims to investigate how practices such as inspirational motivation and idealized influence contribute to enhancing teacher motivation, performance, and the integration of character-building initiatives within the educational environment.

METHOD

Research Design

This type of research is qualitative - ethnography. Qualitative research is research that produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or other ways of measurement (Husaini & Sutama, [2021](#)). This method is expected to examine objects in natural conditions, where the researcher acts as the main instrument. The focus of this research is to explore the meaning contained in the data obtained (Husaini & Sutama, [2021](#)). This research also aims to understand in depth the views and experiences of a person or group (Husaini & Sutama, [2021](#)). The ethnographic approach is a research approach that aims to understand the culture and behavior of a community group by studying and describing their daily lives (Setyowati, [2014](#)). Ethnography is a research approach used to understand the meanings and symbols used by a group of people in their daily lives (Yusanto, [2020](#)).

Research Setting

This research was conducted at SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong, which is located in Gandurejo RT 05B, Gemolong District, Sragen Regency, Central Java. The implementation of the research took place from December 2024 to mid-February 2025. The subjects of this study amounted to 20 people consisting of 1 principal, 2 vice principals, 2 treasurers, 1 BUMS coordinator, 6 class teachers, 1 janitor, 1 security officer, 1 store employee, 1 kitchen coordinator, and 4 6th grade students. The process of selecting subjects in this study, for teachers and employees, is those who have a tenure of more than 12 years, the same tenure as the principal or at least 8 years. This selection is with the aim that the subject can provide comprehensive information and information about the development of the principal's leadership from the beginning of leading until now. As for students, grade VI was chosen because it has been at least 5 years and is considered capable of providing information.

Data Collection Technique

This research data collection uses two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from the results of in-depth interviews with 20 research subjects, as

well as observations made during the research. The selection of interview subjects was based on the consideration that the sources could provide complete and in-depth information related to the research conducted. Secondary data was obtained from documentation, which includes information from various sources such as school profiles, organizational structures, meeting notes, existing evidence, or archives that can be published or not. The research data presented in this article has received approval from SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong to be published.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using a developed qualitative analysis model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification (Setyowati, [2014](#)). To demonstrate the validity of the data in this study, source triangulation techniques (principal, deputy principal, teachers, treasurer of BUMS coordinator, employees, and students) and triangulation of data collection techniques (observation and interview) were used. The steps in the research are shown in the Figure 1.

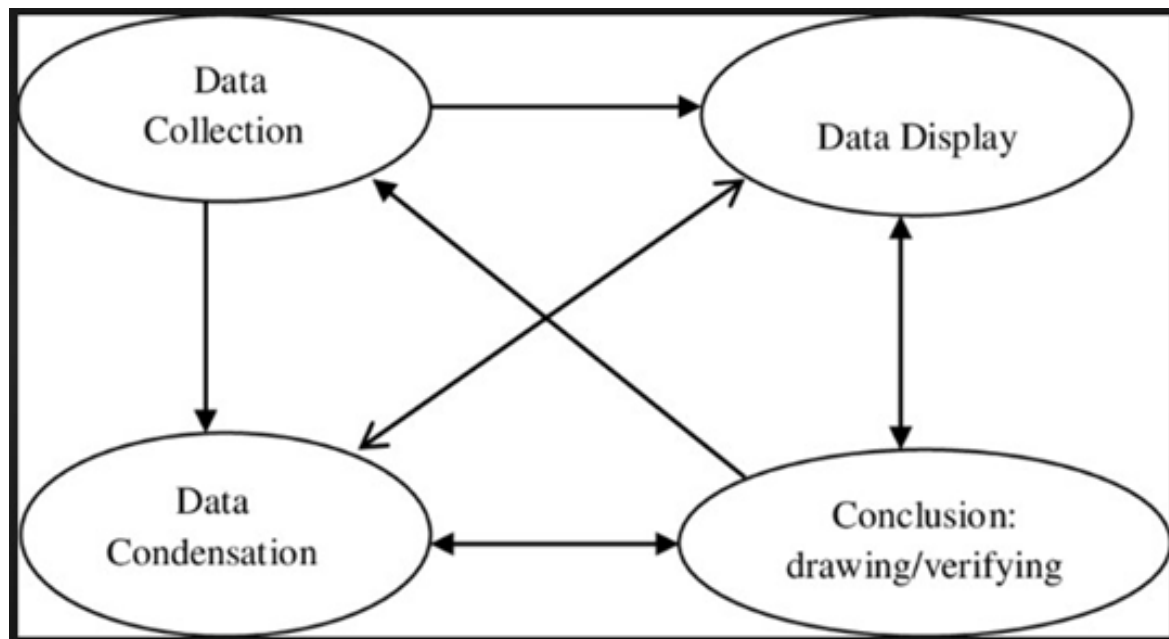


Figure 1. Research Steps

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

a. Leadership Style at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School

A principal, in managing a school, needs an appropriate management strategy and art. This becomes very important because what is faced is a human being who can move, think, and argue. The art of management and the right leadership style in managing schools, especially their human resources,

will make it easier for principals to carry out their duties because they are able to embrace human resources, in this case teachers and employees, to move forward together in developing schools (Maris et al., [2017](#)).

In the history of the development of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong, there has been a change of leadership three times. In each period of principal leadership, each principal has a different leadership style in managing human resources in Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School. The focus of this research is on the leadership style of the principal of Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School from 2014 to present, namely Mr. Murdiyanto. As the interview results are shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Interview Results with Principal, Senior Teachers and Curriculum

No.	Source	Interview Results
1	Murdiyanto (principal)	"At SD Aisyiyah, I am the third principal. The first principal was a pioneer, not too focused on managing HR management; there were no SOPs, there were regulations, but they were not organized in detail and neatly. The second principal started to design a rule (SOP) and build a system for teachers and employees, but it could not be implemented optimally and appropriately. When I came in, there was just a change of principal, so my initial program was to complete and perfect the SOPs and start implementing the SOPs."
2	Umi Fathonah (senior teacher)	"Mr. Murdiyanto came to SD Aisyiyah in 2010. The previous principals were Mrs. Sumirah and Mr. Misbach. When he first came, there were pros and cons because he was a new teacher. But Mr. Mur tried to embrace all teachers, both senior and junior, to work together to build the school. The first thing he did was to implement the school SOP."
3	Samsul Bahri (curriculum)	"I saw that at that time, what Mr. Murdiyanto did at the beginning as principal was to continue the program that the previous principal had made, namely implementing the school SOP. Although he had many challenges, he tried to embrace all teachers and employees."

The human resources challenge faced at that time was that the principal was faced with the existing human resources in the school, namely the existence of senior teachers, teachers of the same generation, and junior teachers. In managing human resources of different generations, it certainly cannot be done with the same leadership style; it requires different strategies, management art, and leadership styles according to the generation.

The results of interviews with other school components related to the principal's leadership style are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. Interview Results with Other School Components

No.	Source	Interview Results
1	Murdiyanto (principal)	"We listen more to the seniors, make a separate forum instead of one, accommodate suggestions and input from the seniors, and maybe have more of an open style. With the same generation, we have more discussions. If you're talking 50:50:50 and more democratic. With the newer generation, there is more emphasis on rules and instructions and maybe a bit more of a semi-authoritarian style."
2	Dara Risky Rahmawati (first grade teacher)	"I see Mr. Mur as a leader who embraces all teachers and employees to move forward. I see that he does not differentiate between teachers and employees; his leadership style is sometimes democratic, willing to listen, but sometimes it is rather firm and hard in an effort to enforce the school SOP rules and applicable regulations."
3	Samsul Bahri (curriculum)	"I saw that it was a rather difficult period for Mr. Mur, because I saw that there was still a gap between senior teachers and new teachers and the level of trust was lacking because at that time Mr. Mur was considered new, having only been a teacher at SD Aisyiyah for four years."
4	Fathurrahman (deputy head of infrastructure)	"At the beginning of his leadership, Mr. Murdiyanto tried to embrace all elements; senior teachers, juniors, young and old, all have their respective roles to raise Aisyiyah Elementary School; they cannot walk alone; they must work together."
5	Erna Dyah Kusumowati (third grade teacher)	"Mr. Murdiyanto always motivates subordinates to move forward and develop. Inspiring teachers to be pioneers, not followers."

The principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong, in dealing with more senior resources, applies an open democratic leadership style and listens more to input suggestions from seniors. In addition, he also forms a special forum to accommodate the input of these suggestions so that they become material for joint discussion to develop the school in a better direction (Ishartono et al., [2024](#), [2025](#); Otis et al., [2025](#)). In dealing with human resources of the same age, the principal of Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School also applies a democratic leadership style by having many discussions related to advancing and developing the school. Communication with the same generation is easier to do because they have almost the same frequency with the same history of struggle when they first became teachers at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School (Fauziah et al., [2025](#); Mufid et al., [2025](#); Ulya et al., [2025](#)). Meanwhile, in dealing with more junior employee teachers, the principal of Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School applies a semi-authoritarian leadership style and emphasizes more on rules and protocols as well as their respective duties and functions.

b. Human Resource Management at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School

The transformational process occurs in leadership relationships when leaders build subordinates' awareness of the importance of work values, expand and improve needs beyond personal interests, and encourage these changes towards common interests, including transformational leadership practices

(Suhaimi & Khalik, [2018](#)). The transformational leadership practices of the principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong that can be seen include inspirational motivation and idealization of influence through the principal's creative ideas.

a. Inspirational Motivation

Principals play a very important role in the progress of a school. As leaders, one of their main responsibilities is to provide encouragement that can inspire the entire school community. This inspiration is not only conveyed through verbal direction and guidance but can also be shown through concrete action (Sugianto, [2024](#)). To motivate teachers and employees, the principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong often utilizes video shows or inspirational stories during work meetings or regular meetings. Through these shows, it is expected that teachers can take valuable lessons and be motivated to be more active in developing themselves and the potential of students in a more positive direction. As the results of interviews with class teachers and employees are as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Interview Results with Cleaning Staff

No.	Source	Interview Results
1	Andhika Wahyu Adi Saputra (6th grade teacher)	"In motivating teachers and employees, Mr. Mur often provides inspirational stories and also real experiences so that teachers are always motivated to move forward and develop."
2	Nanang Pujiyanto (cleaning staff)	"I see Mr. Mur as a leader who always motivates and inspires his subordinates. He usually gives motivational stories to teachers and employees during meetings and recitation's."

In addition, the principal also demonstrates the importance of writing activities by being a direct role model for teachers, staff, and students. The written works will be published on the school's social media, class magazines, and newspapers. This is expected to foster a love of writing in the school environment. The principal also organizes a routine study program that is held every Monday at the end of the learning session. In this activity, teachers and staff take turns sharing encouragement and motivation with their colleagues. Through this initiative, the principal continues to provide encouragement and opportunities for all teachers to continue to develop themselves and explore their potential.

b. Idealizing Influence through the Principal's Creative Ideas

To achieve the school's vision, mission, and goals, the principal encourages creative ideas to the teachers. He continues to challenge teachers to develop themselves and their competencies so that they can continue to change for the better (Kadarsih et al., [2020](#)). To improve knowledge and skills, the principal encourages and provides opportunities for teachers to join advanced study programs for those who do not have a linear pathway, as well as master's programs for those who are interested. In addition, the principal also provides opportunities for teachers and staff to participate in various self-development trainings, so that they can become more professional. The results of interviews with the principal, teachers and staff are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Interview Results with Principal, Teachers and Employees

No.	Source	Interview Results
1	Murdiyanto (principal)	“For further studies for teachers, we are encouraging, not obliging. But we convey the consequences if the teacher is not linear. We motivate them by example, that's why I studied for my master's and doctoral degrees, one of the goals is to encourage teachers to be motivated. Teachers who wish to continue their studies must sign an integrity pact with the school, so as not to interfere with their teaching duties at SD Aisiyiah. Subsidies will also be given to teachers who sign an agreement not to move from SD Aisiyiah, at least for a period of ten years”.
2	Umi Fathonah (senior teacher)	“The principal always encourages us to continue to develop and innovate and keep up with technological developments, in order to provide the best service”
3	Heni Purwaningsih (school treasurer)	“I see that Mr. Mur is a very responsible person, nurturing subordinates and giving full trust to subordinates when carrying out activities. In addition, he also continues to encourage learning and technology literacy so that he can provide the best service”

The principal always encourages teachers and staff to provide the best service to students and create programs that support student development to achieve high quality. The principal encourages teachers to continue to innovate in managing learning in the classroom and maximize the use of technology-based learning media, in order to keep up with the times in today's digital era.

Discussion

a. Leadership Style at Aisiyiah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School

Managing human resources with different characters and generations became a challenge for Mr. Murdiyanto as the new principal. The principal applies different leadership styles to deal with the differences in the character of these human resources, because basically the leadership style applied will affect the behavior of the people being led. This is in line with the results of research which states that leadership types and styles are closely related to behavioral norms in a person when influencing the behavior of others (N. Akbar, [2017](#)).

The types of leadership styles applied by the principal of Aisiyiah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School are democratic, open, visionary, semi-authoritarian, charismatic and situational. This is in line with the results of research which states various types of leadership styles including democratic leadership style; delegative leadership style; bureaucratic leadership style; laissez faire leadership style; authoritarian/authoritarian leadership style; charismatic leadership style; diplomatic leadership style; moralist leadership style; administrative leadership style; analytical leadership style; entrepreneurial leadership style; visionary leadership style; situational leadership style; and militaristic leadership (N. Akbar, [2017](#)). This is also in line with the research which states the types of leadership styles, namely, 1) charismatic leadership style, 2) democratic leadership style, 3) free leadership style, 4) transformational leadership style, 5) paternalistic leadership style (Nahnudin et al., [2023](#)).

The development of the leadership style of the principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong currently aims to embrace all generations of teachers and staff to have a common goal and to transform together to improve self-competence, working maximally according to their respective duties. The principal invites all teachers and staff to improve the work environment, enhance work motivation, work patterns, and shared work values to achieve organizational goals. This aligns with research which states that transformational leadership influences organizational change in elementary schools. Organizational change in elementary schools is influenced by 60% by the transformational leadership of the principal (Windasari et al., [2022](#)).

As defined, transformational leadership is the ability of a leader to change the work environment, work motivation, work patterns, and work values perceived by subordinates so that they can better optimize performance to achieve organizational goals (Fadhilah et al., [2020](#)). This means that a transformational process occurs in the leadership relationship when leaders build subordinates' awareness of the importance of work values, expand and enhance needs beyond personal interests, and encourage these changes toward common interests, including transformational leadership practices that can be seen through four behaviors: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Fadhilah et al., 2020). Documentation of interviews with the school principal is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Documentation of the Principal Interview

b. Human Resource Management at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School

The school principal plays an important role in inspiring teachers, staff, and students by setting a good example. By directly demonstrating the attitudes and actions expected, the principal can become a role model for the entire school community. A concrete example demonstrated by the principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong is arriving at school before the teachers. When the regulation states that

on-duty teachers should arrive at school by 06:20, the principal arrives at 06:00 or 06:15. This aligns with research which states that successful principals are those who always arrive early and serve as an inspiration for the school community (Rahayu, [2018](#)). The key to the success of a transformational principal lies in their ability to be a role model, not just a leader who issues commands (Jani, [2023](#)).

In addition, the principal also sets a direct example for teachers, staff, or students by picking up trash and putting it in the trash can when he sees it or even sweeping the yard when it looks dirty and has not been cleaned. This is also in line with the findings of research which states that transformational leadership is an approach aimed at changing awareness, inspiring enthusiasm, and motivating subordinates or group members by providing exemplary behavior (Habibi & Maya Hapsari, [2023](#)). This approach encourages them to make extra efforts to achieve group goals without feeling pressured.

Regarding uniform discipline, the principal always exemplifies by wearing the appropriate uniform for the day, complete with all necessary attributes. When a teacher or staff member does not comply with the uniform regulations, the principal imposes sanctions according to the applicable rules. As per the results of interviews with sixth-grade students as seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the Interview with Students

No.	Source	Interview Results
1	Makayla Afia Sampurno (sixth-grade student)	"During my time at Aisyiyah Elementary School, I rarely met Mr. Mur, as he seldom entered the classroom, probably because he was very busy with his duties. But I know Mr. Mur is someone who pays great attention to students, teachers, and the school. In my opinion, he is quite democratic, willing to listen to suggestions and criticisms. However, when it comes to rules, he is very strict, not differentiating between students, teachers, and staff."
2	Muhammad Hamam Az- Zaky (sixth-grade student)	"At that time, I once saw Mr. Mur sweeping the yard and disposing of the accumulated trash. I also saw him scolding students for littering. In short, when it comes to rules and discipline, Mr. Mur is very strict and always sets an example."
3	Nasai Basyar Azis (sixth-grade student)	"As far as I know, Mr. Mur is always disciplined and can set an example. He is rarely late, and his attire is always complete. I once saw Mr. Mur ask a child who was not wearing a hat during the ceremony to participate in the ceremony outside the school gate."

The principal of Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School also demonstrates the importance of writing activities by being a direct role model for teachers, staff, and students. The written works will be published on the school's social media, class bulletin boards, and newspapers. This is expected to foster a love for writing within the school environment. This aligns with the research findings from (Izzati et al., [2024](#)) conducted at Muhammadiyah Birrul Walidain Kudus Elementary School regarding the transformational leadership of the principal, which concluded that the principal shows the cultivation of inspiration through the screening of inspirational videos, writing activities, and the inspiring Monday program.

The school principal also organizes a regular recitation program held every Monday at the end of the learning session. In this activity, teachers and staff take turns sharing enthusiasm and motivation with their colleagues. Through this initiative, the principal consistently provides encouragement and opportunities for all teachers to continue developing themselves and exploring their potential. This aligns with the research which emphasizing that a fundamental aspect that transformational leaders must possess is the ability to inspire the human resources they lead with everything that comes from within themselves. This inspiration serves as an approach to influence and motivate members of the educational organization (Suhada, [2021](#)) (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Inspiration from the Principal

This research proposition can be used to develop the dimension of providing inspiration based on existing transformational leadership theory. This proposition indicates that the behavior of school principals in providing inspiring encouragement is not limited to verbal communication but also involves the leader's direct engagement in every activity with the school community. In this research, it was found that inspiration can be fostered through the screening of inspirational shows and stories, as well as writing activities and recitation programs. Furthermore, clear communication regarding vision, mission, and goals to subordinates, along with good role modeling in attitude and speech, demonstrates that principals can succeed in providing inspiring encouragement (Effendi, [2022](#)).

The principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong always strives to inspire teachers and staff to continue developing, exploring their potential, and enhancing professionalism to provide the best service to students. The principal encourages teachers to continuously innovate in managing classroom

learning and to maximize the use of technology-based learning media to keep up with the times in the current digital era (Nurrochman et al., [2023](#)). This finding is in line with research which emphasizes that transformational leadership is a type of leadership that can drive fundamental change, supported by values of religion, systems, and culture. This aims to encourage innovation and creativity among followers in achieving the established vision (Wiratmoko et al., [2022](#)) (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Implementation of Training and Work Meeting

The principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong has also implemented several changes and new programs such as: 1) refining the standard operating procedures for teachers and staff, 2) creating a more effective, transparent recruitment system for new teachers and staff that meets needs, 3) establishing technical regulations, recruitment flow stages, and programs for new teachers and staff, 4) developing a unique and creative concept for the admission process of new students, 5) creating an effective school organizational structure by selecting four deputy principals and coordinators to assist in his duties, 6) placing teachers according to their competencies and capabilities and conducting periodic rotations, 7) refining the school's salary regulations and creating a retirement program for teachers and staff, 8) implementing reward, consequence, and refreshing programs for teachers and staff, 9) developing programs for the school-owned business entity (BUMS), 10) creating and implementing self-development programs to enhance competencies and achievements for teachers, staff, and students, and 11) increasing networking by establishing local collaborations (hospitals, community health centers, police stations, military commands, schools, campuses) and international collaborations (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, De Javato Foundation).

The findings described above were in line with the research which studied at MIM PK Karatasura. The research showed that the leadership of MIM PK Kartasura was able to simplify complex problems by emphasizing task descriptions to their subordinates. Thus, the leadership only needed to communicate with the subordinates involved in the issues to find solutions (Minsih et al., [2019](#)). The above findings are also in line with the results of research which explains that transformational leaders act as drivers of change. They provide motivation and inspiration to their subordinates to be more creative and innovative (Yufita & Sihotang, [2020](#)). With a transformational leadership approach, organizations can further increase job satisfaction, trigger extra effort, and achieve performance that exceeds expectations, as well as create creativity and innovation (Sumbung et al., [2022](#)).

From the results of research on transformational leadership of principals in managing human resources at Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong Elementary School, it provides benefits in: 1) improving the quality of learning, 2) improving the performance of teachers and employees 3) improving the job satisfaction of teachers and employees, 4) improving the abilities and skills of teachers and employees, 5) improving the quality of services to students and parents. This research still has limitations and still requires further research. This research has not been able to explore very detailed and in-depth information related to the leadership of the principal of SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong from the beginning of the leadership due to limited sources from teachers or employees who have more than 15 years of service, with the hope of providing detailed and comprehensive information. By realizing these limitations, the researcher realizes that the researcher can design better and more accurate research in the future and provide recommendations for the practice of transformational leadership at SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted at SD Aisyiyah Unggulan Gemolong concludes that the principal's effective implementation of transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in managing human resources and fostering school development. By employing a combination of open, democratic, visionary, and semi-authoritarian leadership styles, the principal successfully embraced diverse personnel to collaboratively advance the institution. Transformational leadership was operationalized through inspirational motivation and idealized influence, as demonstrated by the principal's use of inspirational media, storytelling, writing initiatives, and regular reflective programs that reinforced the school's vision and mission. These efforts were complemented by strategic innovations, including comprehensive human resource development initiatives, infrastructure enhancement, financial improvements, and network expansion. The findings highlight that such leadership significantly enhances teacher motivation, enthusiasm, achievement, and performance, thereby contributing to overall

educational quality. Future research is encouraged to explore the broader applications of transformational leadership in

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