OPTIMIZATION OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FEATURE UTILIZATION USING A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACHAT SDN 2 PAGERWOJO, KENDAL REGENCY

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Abstract

Teacher performance management is vital for enhancing elementary education quality, with principals playing a strategic role, particularly through transformational leadership. This study, using a qualitative approach at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, aimed to analyze the optimization of teacher performance management feature utilization via transformational leadership. Findings show that the principal's inspirational guidance, support for innovation, and focus on individual development significantly boost management effectiveness. However, challenges like teachers' limited understanding of performance indicators, resource constraints, and lack of intrinsic motivation were identified. Recommendations include strengthening academic supervision, providing systematic mentoring, increasing access to professional training, and securing government and education department support. This study suggests transformational leadership is an effective strategy for improving teacher performance management quality, and further research on technology's role and parental involvement is recommended.

Keywords: *academic supervision, professional development, teacher performance management, transformational leadership, work motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental aspect of developing quality human resources (Fahmi Addini et al. 2022). In the context of primary education, the role of the school principal is key to creating a conducive and effective learning environment (Lapir, 2024). Principals act not only as administrators but also as leaders with a strategic role in directing, guiding, and developing teacher performance (Sulistiyarini et al., 2024). One effort principals can make to improve educational quality is by optimizing teacher performance management (Sri Rahayu et al., n.d.). Effective teacher performance management contributes to enhancing teaching quality and student learning outcomes. However, the current challenge lies in ensuring that available teacher performance management features are utilized maximally to achieve optimal educational goals (Ekonomi Bisnis et al., n.d.).

At SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, various teacher performance management features have been implemented, such as academic supervision, indicator-based performance appraisal, and professional training and development. The principal plays a central role in ensuring these features function effectively by providing direction, mentorship, and fostering a work culture that supports improved teacher performance (Arnes et al., 2023). The guidance provided includes developing student-needs-based lesson plans, facilitating reflective discussions on effective teaching methods, and offering constructive feedback through classroom supervision. Additionally, the principal provides mentorship through regular mentoring sessions, classroom visits, and facilitating training tailored to teachers' professional development needs. Teacher performance management comprises several key stages: planning, implementation, follow-up, and performance predicate assessment (Budiarti, 2022).

During the planning stage, the principal sets teacher performance objectives, develops success indicators, and identifies professional development needs. Success indicators are formulated considering aspects such as attendance, readiness in lesson planning, effectiveness of teaching methods used, and student engagement levels in the learning process. The principal also sets achievement targets based on previous performance evaluations and adapts improvement strategies according to individual teacher needs (Iku & Igo Leton, n.d.). The implementation stage involves continuous academic supervision, mentorship, and feedback to ensure teachers can implement

effective learning strategies. Follow up is conducted by providing professional training and development based on the evaluations performed. Meanwhile, teacher performance predicate assessment is conducted based on established indicators, considering pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies (Van Waeyenberg et al., 2022). However, in its implementation, various obstacles persist, such as insufficient utilization of features, limited teacher understanding in using available features, and a lack of motivation to optimize their performance. This situation impacts the effectiveness of the performance management system, which has not yet operated maximally. Therefore, the role of the principal as a transformational leader is crucial to optimize each stage in teacher performance management to enhance the quality of education at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency.

A transformational leadership approach can be a solution to optimize the utilization of teacher performance management features (Prasetyaningsih et al., 2024). Transformational leadership emphasizes intrinsic motivation, inspiration, and individual capacity building within an organization (Bao, 2024). Kareem et al., (2023) posits that transformational leaders can encourage their followers to achieve more than they expect by providing a clear vision, offering individual attention, and challenging them to think innovatively. In an educational context, principals who apply transformational leadership can build positive relationships with teachers, provide guidance focused on improving teaching quality, and encourage innovation and collaboration in educational practices (Shandilia Latunusa Ambawani et al., 2024). Transformational leadership focuses on intrinsic motivation, inspiration, and enhancing individual capacity within an organization. Thus, the principal acts not only as a supervisor but also as a motivator and facilitator in the teacher performance management process (Raharja et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the transformational leadership approach implemented by the principal can play a role in optimizing the utilization of teacher performance management features at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency.

Based on this background, this research seeks to answer several key questions: what is the actual condition of teacher performance management feature utilization at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency; what factors hinder the optimization of teacher performance management features at the school; and how can the transformational leadership approach implemented by the principal help optimize the utilization of teacher performance management features. This study aims to describe the condition of teacher performance management feature utilization at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, identify inhibiting factors in optimizing teacher performance management features, and analyze the application of transformational leadership by the principal in supporting the optimization of teacher performance management features.

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this study can add insight and enrich academic discourse related to teacher performance management and the application of transformational leadership in education. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for principals in developing more effective leadership strategies to improve teacher performance. Additionally, this study can help teachers understand and optimally utilize performance management features to enhance their professionalism. For educational policymakers, the research findings can be used as consideration in formulating policies that support a better teacher performance management system. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of primary education through the transformational leadership approach implemented by the principal in supporting the optimization of teacher performance management feature utilization at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is fundamental to developing quality human resources, with the school principal's role being crucial in fostering effective learning environments, particularly at the primary level. Principals are not just administrators but strategic leaders who guide, nurture, and develop teacher performance. Optimizing teacher performance management is a key effort for principals to enhance educational quality. Effective performance management contributes directly to improved learning quality and student outcomes. However, a significant challenge lies in ensuring that the existing teacher performance management features are maximally utilized to achieve optimal educational goals.

Previous studies highlight various aspects of teacher performance management and leadership in education. Research by Arnes et al., (2023) indicates that principals play a central role in ensuring effective implementation of performance management features through guidance, mentorship, and fostering a supportive work culture. This guidance often includes developing student-needs-based lesson plans, facilitating reflective discussions, and providing constructive feedback through classroom supervision. Mentoring sessions, regular classroom visits, and facilitating relevant training are also critical components of the principal's role in supporting professional development. The process of teacher performance management typically involves planning, implementation, follow-

up, and performance assessment. The planning stage includes setting objectives, developing success indicators (considering aspects like attendance, teaching effectiveness, and student engagement), and identifying professional development needs. Implementation involves ongoing academic supervision and feedback , while follow-up provides professional training based on evaluations. Performance assessment considers pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. Despite these frameworks and features, their full utilization remains a challenge. Existing literature points to issues such as teachers' limited understanding of performance indicators, resource constraints, and a lack of intrinsic motivation among teachers to optimize their performance. This aligns with Herzberg's (1959) motivation theory, which emphasizes the role of intrinsic factors like achievement and recognition in individual performance. This gap in optimal utilization implies that current performance management systems may not be functioning maximally.

Transformational leadership emerges as a promising theoretical framework to address these challenges. It emphasizes intrinsic motivation, inspiration, and individual capacity building within an organization. Transformational leaders inspire followers to achieve beyond expectations by providing a clear vision, offering individual attention, and encouraging innovative thinking(Kareem et al., 2023). In an educational context, principals employing transformational leadership can build positive relationships with teachers, guide them towards improving teaching quality, and foster innovation and collaboration. They act as motivators and facilitators rather than mere supervisors in the performance management process. The dimensions of transformational leadership, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, are crucial. Idealized influence involves principals serving as role models through high commitment and active involvement in supervision. Inspirational motivation entails clearly communicating vision and goals, encouraging higher professional standards, and acknowledging achievements. Intellectual stimulation fosters innovation by encouraging teachers to experiment with new methods and providing relevant training. Individualized consideration focuses on attending to individual teacher needs, providing personal mentoring, and offering emotional support.

The current literature establishes the importance of teacher performance management and the potential of transformational leadership. However, there is a need for more focused research on how specific features of performance management can be optimized through a transformational leadership approach in a specific educational context. While studies discuss aspects of performance management and leadership, the direct analysis of feature utilization through this leadership approach, and the specific challenges and solutions within a particular school setting, present a gap. This study aims to address this by analyzing the actual conditions of teacher performance management feature utilization at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, identifying the specific factors hindering their optimization, and examining how the principal's transformational leadership approach can help overcome these barriers to achieve optimal utilization. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the practical implications of transformational leadership in improving teacher performance and overall educational quality.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach to deeply understand the phenomenon of optimizing the utilization of teacher performance management features through a transformational leadership approach at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency (Nasir et al.,2023). The qualitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to explore experiences, perceptions, and interactions within the school environment holistically and contextually. This study utilized a case study design to analyze in depth the implementation of transformational leadership by the principal in optimizing teacher performance management. A case study was selected to provide a more comprehensive overview of the factors supporting and hindering the optimization of teacher performance management features.

The research was conducted at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency. Research subjects consisted of the school principal, teachers, and educational staff involved in the performance management system. Subject selection was done using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that they have direct involvement in the implementation of teacher performance management features and the application of transformational leadership by the principal. In this study, data was collected through several techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers to understand how transformational leadership is applied and how teacher performance management features are utilized. Participant observation involved directly observing the interactions between the principal and teachers, as well as the implementation of performance management programs, to obtain authentic data. Documentation was used to gather data from school documents such as academic supervision reports, teacher performance appraisals, and implemented performance management policies.

The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model , which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was performed by filtering and summarizing relevant data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data display involved organizing information in a descriptive narrative format to facilitate understanding. Conclusion drawing was done by interpreting the analyzed data to obtain valid and reliable research findings. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research applied source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various research subjects , while method triangulation involved combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Through this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the principal's role in optimizing teacher performance management features with a transformational leadership approach at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to analyze how the transformational leadership approach implemented by the principal can play a role in optimizing the utilization of teacher performance management features at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency. The findings of this study are presented in several sections outlining the actual conditions of teacher performance management feature utilization, factors hindering optimization, and the role of the principal's transformational leadership in supporting teacher performance management. This discussion will also link the findings with relevant theories to provide a deeper understanding.

Actual Conditions of Teacher Performance Management Feature Utilization

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, it was found that SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, has implemented various teacher performance management features, such as academic supervision, indicator-based performance appraisal, and professional training and development programs. Academic supervision is regularly conducted by the principal, who directly observes the learning process in the classroom and provides feedback to teachers. Indicator-based teacher performance appraisal includes aspects such as attendance, effectiveness of learning strategies, student engagement, and mastery of subject matter. Meanwhile, professional training and development programs are organized in the form of workshops, seminars, and peer mentoring among teachers.

However, in their implementation, several obstacles were found that prevented these features from being optimally utilized. Some teachers still experience difficulty understanding and applying the established performance indicators. Additionally, resource limitations, such as insufficient time for more intensive supervision and limited access to quality training, also pose challenges in optimizing teacher performance management.

Factors Hindering the Optimization of Teacher Performance Management Features

The research results indicate that several main factors hinder the optimization of teacher performance management feature utilization. According to Ekonomi Bisnis et al, the success of performance management is significantly influenced by individual understanding, organizational support, and the availability of adequate resources. In the context of this research, the first factor is the low understanding of some teachers regarding the importance of performance management as part of professional development. Some teachers still view supervision and performance appraisal as administrative burdens rather than self-development tools. The second factor is the limited support in terms of resources, including time, budget, and facilities, to support more comprehensive training programs. The third factor is the lack of intrinsic motivation among teachers to improve their performance independently without strong external encouragement. This aligns with Herzberg's (1959) theory of work motivation, as cited by (Sulastri et al., 2024), which states that intrinsic factors such as achievement and recognition play a significant role in enhancing individual performance.

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Teacher Performance Management

The principal plays a very important role in creating an environment that supports the optimization of teacher performance management features. At SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, the principal actively provides direction and mentorship to teachers in developing more effective learning plans. For instance, the principal holds weekly mentoring sessions where teachers can discuss teaching challenges and collectively find solutions. Furthermore, the principal regularly observes classroom learning activities, provides constructive feedback, and appreciates innovations made by teachers in implementing more interactive teaching methods. Based on the research findings, the principal at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency, implements several dimensions of transformational leadership:

idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Rahma Dewi, 2024).

First, in terms of idealized influence, the principal serves as a role model for teachers by demonstrating a high commitment to improving educational quality. The principal is actively involved in academic supervision processes and provides examples of good teaching practices. Second, in the aspect of inspirational motivation, the principal motivates teachers by clearly communicating the school's vision and goals, and encourages them to achieve higher standards of professionalism. This is done through routine meetings, reflective discussions, and recognition for teacher achievements that demonstrate improved performance.

Third, regarding intellectual stimulation, the principal encourages innovation in the learning process by inviting teachers to explore more effective teaching strategies. The principal provides space for teachers to experiment with new methods and supports their professional development through relevant training. Fourth, concerning individualized consideration, the principal pays attention to the individual needs and development of teachers. The principal conducts personal mentoring, provides emotional support, and facilitates teachers in overcoming challenges they face in learning.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of transformational leadership by the principal has a significant impact on teacher performance management. By creating a supportive environment, providing inspiration, and facilitating innovation and individual development, the principal can help optimize the utilization of teacher performance management features. These findings are consistent with Bass and Avolio's (1994) theory, as cited by Shandilia Latunusa Ambawani et al., which states that transformational leadership can enhance motivation, commitment, and individual performance within an organization.

However, to achieve better optimization, additional strategies involving various educational stakeholders are needed. The principal can strengthen academic supervision by establishing a more structured mentoring system, providing awards for high-achieving teachers, and increasing access to professional training. Teachers can play a role by actively participating in competency development programs, collaborating in learning communities, and implementing innovative learning strategies tailored to student needs. The education department and local government can provide support by offering more flexible policies related to teacher supervision and performance development, and by ensuring the availability of adequate resources. Furthermore, parental involvement in supporting the learning process can also be optimized through more intensive communication and collaboration programs with the school. Collaboration among teachers in the form of learning communities can also be a solution to improve the understanding and more effective implementation of performance management features.

Thus, this research confirms that the success of teacher performance management depends not only on the existence of provided features but also on how the principal, as a transformational leader, can optimize their utilization. The practical implications of this study suggest that principals should be more proactive in providing mentorship, fostering a reflective culture among teachers, and developing more systematic competency improvement programs. With this approach, schools can ensure that every teacher has a better understanding of their performance management and can effectively apply it in the learning process. Moreover, the results of this research can serve as a basis for educational policies more oriented towards strengthening transformational leadership in other schools. Principals who can inspire, guide, and provide continuous support to teachers will create a more dynamic and high-quality learning environment, ultimately having a positive impact on improving the quality of education at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings regarding the optimization of teacher performance management feature utilization through a transformational leadership approach at SDN 2 Pagerwojo, Kendal Regency , it can be concluded that the principal plays a central role in creating an environment that supports improved teacher performance. The transformational leadership applied, such as providing inspirational guidance, supporting learning innovations, and paying attention to individual teacher development, contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the performance management system. Although teacher performance management features have been implemented, there are still several obstacles, such as some teachers' low understanding, resource limitations, and a lack of intrinsic motivation to improve their performance independently. Therefore, the principal's role as a transformational leader is key to overcoming these barriers.

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