

Transformational Leadership Strategies in Developing Life Skills Training Programs For Students of Paket C PKBM Suka Madju

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership strategies in developing life skills training programs for Paket C students at PKBM Suka Madju. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore leadership dynamics and their impact on educational outcomes. The novelty of this study lies in examining transformational leadership within nonformal education, an area that has received limited attention compared to its application in formal education institutions. The findings indicate that transformational leadership significantly enhances program effectiveness by increasing student participation, aligning the curriculum with labor market needs, and integrating interactive, technology-based teaching methods. However, several challenges remain, including limited financial resources, low student motivation, and insufficient public awareness of the importance of nonformal education. To address these issues, PKBM Suka Madju continues to strengthen its institutional management, improve teacher development programs, and expand partnerships with industry and government agencies. The study highlights the need for sustained leadership development and collaboration to ensure the long-term success of life skills training programs in nonformal education.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, life skills training, nonformal education, Paket C, PKBM Suka Madju.

INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership has gained increasing importance in today's dynamic and competitive world. This leadership style plays a crucial role in inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve shared visions, enhancing organizational effectiveness in dealing with continuous change (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Transformational leaders not only provide ideal influence and individual attention but also stimulate innovative thinking and motivate teams to achieve optimal performance. Additionally, this leadership approach contributes to fostering employees' innovative behaviors by encouraging continuous learning, supporting them in tackling complex challenges, and creating an environment conducive to innovation (Afsar & Umrani, 2019). Furthermore, transformational leadership enhances creativity through improvements in self-efficacy and a culture of knowledge sharing, making it a critical factor in driving sustainable organizational change (Jiang & Chen, 2018).

Despite its extensive application in formal educational institutions, the implementation of transformational leadership in nonformal education remains limited. Community Learning Centers (PKBM) play a vital role in providing alternative education pathways, particularly for students who cannot access formal schooling. One such institution, PKBM Suka Madju, offers the Paket C equivalency program, which serves as a second chance for students to attain high school-level education. The institution faces various challenges, including resource constraints, digital media limitations, and inadequate government support (Ansori et al., 2024). Effective leadership is crucial in overcoming these barriers, as strong and adaptive management is essential for the success of nonformal education programs (Lausa et al., 2024). Furthermore, educational leadership in nonformal settings demands a transformative approach that can inspire and empower both students and instructors to achieve greater educational outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

PKBM Suka Madju has undergone several leadership transitions in recent years, which have significantly influenced its educational strategies and program effectiveness. Leadership changes often bring new visions and policies, impacting operational management, educator motivation, and student engagement. As (Wakit, 2023) highlights, the rapid shifts in the digital era require leaders who can motivate and set exemplary standards in both managerial and communication aspects. Additionally, the concept of prophetic leadership in nonformal education, which emphasizes values such as trustworthiness and wisdom, has proven effective in guiding institutions toward achieving their missions amid global challenges (Fadliah, 2023). Learning from the experiences of bilingual schools in Jordan, where new leaders rely on informal learning to adapt to their responsibilities, further underscores the importance of leadership adaptability (Verawati et al., 2021). Research in Indonesia also emphasizes that successful leadership in nonformal education is characterized by creativity, innovation, and strong communication skills, which are vital for sustaining program effectiveness (Widodo et al., 2017).

The research focuses on understanding how transformational leadership strategies are applied at PKBM Suka Madju, specifically in developing life skills training programs for Paket C students. Life skill is a kind of non formal education program that centered on vocational skill for student, such as sewing skill in a course and training (Yulianingsih, 2017). Transformational leadership as a process in which leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve their full potential while contributing to collective goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This involves instilling emotions, providing a compelling vision, and fostering deep interpersonal connections. By applying this leadership approach, PKBM Suka Madju aims to create an inspiring learning environment that enhances both academic and life skills among students. This aligns with findings that effective educational leadership in nonformal institutions is pivotal for sustaining program quality and innovation (Yukl, 2013).

Given the challenges in maintaining high-quality nonformal education, transformational leadership is expected to provide a sustainable solution. PKBM Suka Madju was established on August 16, 2004, in Sukolilo, Sukodadi, Lamongan, as a means to improve educational opportunities for marginalized communities. Many students in the region face literacy and skill deficits, particularly those from low-income families who have limited access to formal education. Through various literacy and vocational training programs, PKBM Suka Madju seeks to equip learners with essential competencies for personal and professional development. This approach aligns with broader efforts to ensure that nonformal education programs are both relevant and responsive to societal needs (Lausa et al., 2024).

In the past three years, PKBM Suka Madju has experienced significant growth, with increasing student enrollment, improved facilities, and more competent instructors. These advancements are attributed to a shift in management from traditional leadership to a transformational approach, where leadership plays a crucial role in the overall success of the organization. According to (Bass & Riggio, 2006), transformational leadership fosters innovation, motivation, and adaptability—key factors in driving institutional progress. However, challenges persist, particularly in maintaining student motivation and participation. Many students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and struggle with limited access to technology and learning resources, further exacerbating educational disparities (Fadhiah, 2023).

Addressing these issues requires strong and strategic leadership that can mobilize resources, inspire learners, and engage stakeholders. Research by (Yanto, 2022) suggests that even with limited resources, well-managed nonformal education programs can significantly contribute to educational equity. Moreover, implementing total quality management principles has been shown to enhance educational services through continuous improvement strategies (Ilyas, 2019). Additionally, systematic quality mapping within PKBMs can help identify weaknesses and optimize institutional performance (Komar et al., 2021). These findings highlight the importance of transformational leadership in fostering a sustainable and high-quality learning environment in nonformal education settings.

Although much research has been conducted on transformational leadership, studies specifically examining its application in nonformal education remain scarce. Most existing research focuses on formal institutions such as secondary schools and universities, leaving a gap in understanding how transformational leadership strategies can address challenges unique to PKBMs. Furthermore, limited studies explore the factors influencing the success of life skills training programs in nonformal education settings. This research aims to bridge these gaps by providing an in-depth analysis of leadership strategies at PKBM Suka Madju and their impact on program sustainability.

The findings of this study are expected to offer practical insights for PKBM administrators and nonformal education policymakers. By identifying key leadership strategies that enhance life skills training effectiveness, the research provides a framework for improving educational management in similar institutions. Additionally, the study contributes to policy development by recommending strategies that strengthen leadership capacity within PKBMs, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact (Al Faruq & Supriyanto, 2020). The results can also serve as a reference for other nonformal education providers seeking to implement transformational leadership practices to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

In conclusion, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how transformational leadership influences life skills training programs in PKBM Suka Madju. By examining leadership strategies, identifying challenges, and exploring solutions, the research offers valuable contributions to both theory and practice in nonformal education management. The ultimate goal is to ensure that PKBM Suka Madju and similar institutions continue to provide high-quality, relevant, and sustainable educational opportunities for underserved communities.

METHOD

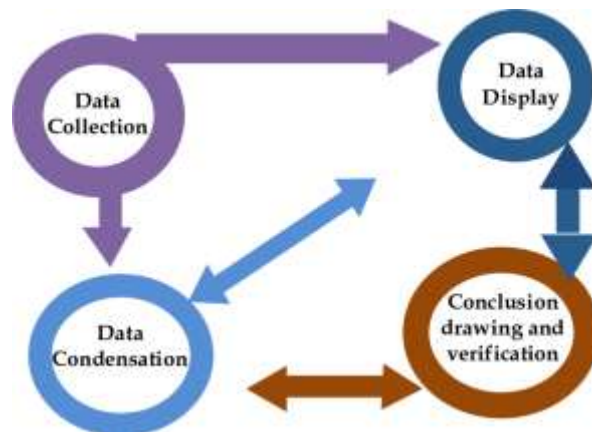
The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju.

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This approach is suitable for analyzing complex social phenomena and exploring leadership strategies that influence the quality of the Paket C equivalency program. As (Creswell, 2017) states, qualitative research aims to "explore and understand the meaning attributed by individuals or groups to a social or human problem". The case study method allows the researcher to examine a specific case comprehensively, providing rich insights into the real-life context of PKBM Suka Madju. According to (Wang et al., 2023), case study research enables "a holistic and integrated examination of real-world cases while considering their context". This study combines various data collection techniques, including in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, ensuring a thorough and triangulated understanding of the leadership dynamics within the institution.

The research subjects include key stakeholders at PKBM Suka Madju, namely the institution's leadership, teaching staff, and students participating in the Paket C program. The leadership plays a crucial role in implementing transformational leadership strategies, while educators provide insights into how leadership influences teaching practices and student engagement. Meanwhile, students serve as the primary beneficiaries of the program, offering perspectives on the impact of leadership on their learning experiences. Data analysis follows a thematic approach, allowing the identification of patterns and themes emerging from the collected information. To ensure data validity, the study employs credibility measures such as triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 2000a). Additionally, the research maintains dependability by documenting all steps systematically, ensuring consistency and reliability in the findings (Miles et al., 2014). The study's results are expected to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of transformational leadership in nonformal education, particularly in enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of life skills training programs at PKBM Suka Madju

Figure 1 data analysis techniques



DISCUSSION

Transformational Leadership Strategy at PKBM Suka Madju

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing the management and effectiveness of nonformal education at PKBM Suka Madju. This leadership style, as described by (Bass & Riggio, 2006), consists of four main dimensions: idealized influence,

inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The leader at PKBM Suka Madju implements strategies that focus on inspiring educators, motivating students, and fostering a culture of continuous learning. According to (Natan & Hidayat, 2023), transformational leadership in nonformal education significantly enhances teacher motivation and teaching effectiveness. This approach has helped create a dynamic learning environment that encourages students to actively participate and develop essential life skills.

One of the primary strategies employed is idealized influence, where leaders serve as role models for both teachers and students. The ability of leaders to demonstrate strong ethics, commitment, and professionalism has a direct impact on the morale and motivation of educators. Research by (Yukl, 2013) suggests that transformational leaders inspire their followers by setting an example of dedication and integrity. At PKBM Suka Madju, the head of the institution consistently demonstrates a proactive approach in problem-solving, program development, and student engagement. This has led to a more cohesive educational environment where teachers feel supported and students are motivated to succeed.

Figure 2. Regular meeting of PKBM head, tutors, and committee



Another key aspect is inspirational motivation, which involves communicating a clear and compelling vision to the team. Leaders at PKBM Suka Madju ensure that all stakeholders, including teachers, students, and community members, understand the institution's goals and the importance of life skills education. (Bass & Riggio, 2006) emphasize that transformational leaders articulate a shared vision that fosters enthusiasm and commitment among followers. By maintaining open communication and regularly engaging with staff and students, the leadership at PKBM Suka Madju fosters a sense of collective purpose, making educational objectives more attainable.

In addition to motivation, intellectual stimulation is a crucial element in transformational leadership. This strategy encourages educators to think creatively, challenge traditional teaching methods, and develop innovative approaches to instruction. Research by (Komar et al., 2021) indicates that intellectual stimulation in leadership enhances critical thinking and innovation among educators, leading to improved teaching methods and student engagement. At PKBM Suka Madju, teachers are encouraged to incorporate technology into their lessons, adopt interactive learning techniques, and continuously seek new strategies to make life skills education more relevant to students' needs.

The final dimension, individualized consideration, involves providing personal support and mentorship to both educators and students. Transformational leaders recognize that each individual has unique strengths and challenges, and they tailor their approach to meet these needs. (Lincoln & Guba, 2000b) argue that individualized attention from leaders fosters a sense of value and belonging, which in turn increases commitment and performance. At PKBM Suka Madju, the leadership team actively mentors teachers, offering

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them professional development opportunities while also ensuring that students receive personalized guidance and motivation. This individualized approach has been instrumental in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Despite its effectiveness, the implementation of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju is not without challenges. Some teachers and staff members initially resisted changes in leadership style, preferring traditional hierarchical structures. As (Bass & Riggio, 2006) note, transformational leadership requires adaptability from all stakeholders, and resistance to change can hinder its effectiveness. To mitigate this, the leadership at PKBM Suka Madju introduced gradual changes, ensuring that staff members had time to adjust while also providing training and support. This approach has proven successful in fostering a more receptive and collaborative culture, ultimately strengthening the institution's overall effectiveness.

Overall, the implementation of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju has resulted in significant improvements in teacher motivation, student engagement, and institutional effectiveness. By focusing on idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, the leadership team has successfully cultivated a dynamic and supportive learning environment. As evidenced by various studies, this leadership style is essential in driving innovation and sustainability in nonformal education (Rosidah et al., 2022). Moving forward, continued investment in leadership training and capacity-building initiatives will be crucial in maintaining the progress achieved and further enhancing the quality of education at PKBM Suka Madju.

Development of Life Skill Training Program at PKBM Suka Madju

The development of the life skills training program at PKBM Suka Madju has been significantly influenced by the implementation of transformational leadership. Research by (Ramakrishnan & Sylvia, 2024) highlights that well-structured life skills programs positively impact student satisfaction and workforce readiness. Over the past three years, PKBM Suka Madju has experienced an increase in student enrollment, improvements in teaching materials, and the integration of more interactive and technology-based learning approaches. This aligns with the broader trends in nonformal education, where institutions are required to continuously adapt to meet the changing demands of society.

One of the major advancements in PKBM Suka Madju's life skills training is the combination of theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience. Studies by (Komar et al., 2021) indicate that experiential learning plays a vital role in ensuring students develop both technical and soft skills needed for real-world applications. At PKBM Suka Madju, programs such as entrepreneurship training, digital literacy workshops, and public speaking courses have been introduced to equip students with essential skills. These initiatives are designed to prepare students not only for employment but also for independent entrepreneurship, allowing them to contribute more actively to their communities.

Another key factor in the program's development is the integration of technology in teaching and learning. The use of digital platforms for learning has expanded access to education, making it easier for students to participate despite economic and geographical constraints. Research by (Putra et al., 2019) highlights the importance of digital learning in improving the quality of nonformal education, as it provides flexibility and accessibility for students with diverse needs. At PKBM Suka Madju, online modules, video-based tutorials, and virtual mentorship programs have been introduced, enabling students to learn at their own pace while still receiving guidance from educators.

Furthermore, collaborations with external stakeholders have significantly contributed to the development of the life skills training program. PKBM Suka Madju has established partnerships with local businesses, vocational training centers, and non-profit organizations to enhance the quality and scope of training offered. According to (Ilyas, 2019), partnerships between educational institutions and industry are essential in ensuring that training programs align with labor market demands. Through these collaborations, students have been given opportunities for internships, hands-on training, and networking with potential employers, thereby increasing their employability upon program completion.

Despite its progress, the life skills training program at PKBM Suka Madju still faces several challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main issues is securing sustainable funding to maintain and expand the program. Many nonformal education institutions struggle with financial constraints that limit their ability to invest in infrastructure, teaching materials, and professional development for educators. To mitigate this, PKBM Suka Madju has actively sought financial support from government grants, private donors, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.

Additionally, ensuring student retention and engagement remains a challenge. Many students at PKBM Suka Madju come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and often have to juggle work and family responsibilities alongside their studies. Research by (Rosidah et al., 2022) emphasizes that social and economic barriers often hinder student participation in nonformal education. To address this, the institution has implemented flexible learning schedules, personalized support programs, and career counseling services to help students balance their commitments while continuing their education.

Figure 3 interviews with informants



The development of life skills training at PKBM Suka Madju serves as a model for other nonformal education institutions aiming to improve student competencies and workforce readiness. By incorporating experiential learning, leveraging technology, fostering industry collaborations, and addressing financial and social challenges, the institution continues to enhance the relevance and impact of its programs. Moving forward, maintaining a strong leadership strategy and seeking further innovations will be crucial in ensuring the sustainability and long-term success of life skills training at PKBM Suka Madju (Ramakrishnan & Sylvia, 2024).

Faktor Pendukung dan Penghambat Implementasi Kepemimpinan Transformasional

The successful implementation of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju is supported by several key factors that enable its growth and sustainability. One of the primary enablers is the commitment and dedication of educators and staff, who play a crucial role in maintaining the quality of the institution's programs. According to (Rosidah et al., 2022), strong teacher commitment significantly enhances the effectiveness of educational

leadership, as it fosters a collaborative and motivated work environment. At PKBM Suka Madju, the leadership actively involves educators in decision-making processes and professional development initiatives, creating a sense of ownership and responsibility among staff. This has resulted in increased teacher motivation and overall improvement in student outcomes.

Another major supporting factor is the openness of leadership to innovation and change. Transformational leaders are known for their willingness to explore new approaches, embrace technological advancements, and adapt to changing educational landscapes. Research by (Natan & Hidayat, 2023) highlights that institutions that encourage innovation in leadership are more likely to achieve long-term success in nonformal education settings. PKBM Suka Madju has adopted digital learning tools, interactive teaching methods, and modern pedagogical approaches to enhance the quality of instruction. These innovations not only improve student engagement but also ensure that learning remains relevant to the demands of the modern workforce.

In addition to internal factors, external support from the community, industry partners, and government agencies plays a vital role in sustaining transformational leadership. (Putra et al., 2019) states that strong collaborations between educational institutions and external stakeholders contribute to the successful implementation of nonformal education programs. At PKBM Suka Madju, partnerships with local businesses and vocational training centers have helped provide additional resources, mentorship opportunities, and job placements for students. Furthermore, government support through educational grants and policy frameworks has facilitated the institution's ability to expand its programs and reach a wider audience.

Despite these advantages, several challenges hinder the full realization of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju. One of the most pressing issues is the limited availability of financial resources to support program expansion and infrastructure development. Research by (Ilyas, 2019) indicates that many nonformal education institutions struggle with financial constraints, which affect their ability to provide high-quality training and maintain adequate learning facilities. At PKBM Suka Madju, efforts have been made to secure additional funding through sponsorships and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. However, securing sustainable financial support remains an ongoing challenge that requires strategic planning and continuous engagement with stakeholders.

Another major obstacle is the low motivation levels among some students, particularly those facing economic hardships. Many students at PKBM Suka Madju come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and balancing education with work and family responsibilities can be overwhelming. Research by (Putra et al., 2019) highlights that nonformal education participants often experience higher dropout rates due to economic and social pressures. To address this, PKBM Suka Madju has implemented flexible learning schedules, personalized mentorship programs, and financial assistance schemes to support students in completing their education. These initiatives have shown promising results in improving student retention and engagement.

A final challenge is the lack of public awareness and recognition of the value of nonformal education. Many people still perceive nonformal education as inferior to traditional schooling, which can discourage student enrollment and limit opportunities for graduates. According to (Widodo et al., 2017), improving the public perception of nonformal education is crucial for its continued success. PKBM Suka Madju has taken proactive steps to address this issue by organizing awareness campaigns, collaborating with local media, and

showcasing the success stories of its graduates. By increasing public understanding of the benefits of life skills training, the institution aims to enhance its credibility and attract more students.

The implementation of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju demonstrates both significant achievements and persistent challenges. While strong leadership, innovation, and community support have contributed to its success, financial constraints, student motivation issues, and societal perceptions continue to pose obstacles. Moving forward, a strategic and adaptive leadership approach will be essential in overcoming these challenges and ensuring the long-term sustainability of PKBM Suka Madju's programs (Ramakrishnan & Sylvia, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on transformational leadership strategies in developing life skills training programs for Paket C students at PKBM Suka Madju, it can be concluded that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of nonformal education. The leadership at PKBM Suka Madju adopts a vision-oriented approach, providing inspiration and fostering strong relationships with educators and students. The implemented leadership strategies include creating a conducive and inspiring learning environment, encouraging innovation in life skills teaching methods, offering motivation and individual support to students, and developing collaborations with external stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the program.

The life skills training program at PKBM Suka Madju has significantly progressed alongside the implementation of transformational leadership. In recent years, the number of participants has increased, the training materials have become more diverse and relevant to workforce demands, and teaching methods have become more interactive and technology-based. Additionally, regular evaluations of program effectiveness have contributed to improving the quality of learning and ensuring that the skills taught can be directly applied by students in their daily lives.

The successful implementation of transformational leadership at PKBM Suka Madju is supported by several key factors, including the commitment of educators, active participation of students, collaborations with external institutions, and the continuous development of learning facilities. However, several challenges remain, such as low student motivation, limited resources, and a lack of public awareness regarding the importance of nonformal education. Through the right strategies to address these obstacles, PKBM Suka Madju continues to enhance the effectiveness of transformational leadership to ensure that the life skills training program remains optimal and relevant to students' needs and workforce demands.

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