

# **LEADERSHIP STYLE OF FEMALE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT SMP NEGERI 5 SIRENJA, DONGGALA REGENCY**

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## ***Abstract***

*This study discusses the "female school principal's leadership style in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency". The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The obtained data are analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, data verification, and drawing conclusions. To check data validity, various types of triangulation and member checks are used. The results regarding the leadership style of the female school principal in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja show that the female principal applies a transformational leadership style reflected in four main dimensions: (1) Idealized Influence (Charismatic), (2) Inspirational Motivation (Participative), (3) Intellectual Stimulation (Competent), and (4) Individualized Consideration (Democratic). Overall, it can be concluded that the success of the principal's leadership is supported by strong cooperation and solidarity among school members, harmonious communication, support from the school committee and community, as well as the principal's good professional competence.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership Style, Female School Principal, Teacher Performance.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is an effort to develop the potential of individuals to survive on their own.<sup>1</sup> Through education, a person must develop professionally to be able to answer challenges in increasingly difficult times. The realization of the goals of the national education system must go through a systematic, directed, and continuous process in a forum, both formal and informal. In the education management system

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<sup>1</sup>Amaliyah, A., & Rahmat, A. (2021). Development of students' self-potential through the educational process. *Attadib: Journal of Elementary Education*, 5(1), 28-45.

in Indonesia, leadership competencies are regulated through the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 22 of 2006 concerning the content standards of school principals or madrasah it is decided that there are five dimensions of competence, namely social competence, supervision competence, entrepreneurial competence, managerial competence, and personality competence. As leaders, school principals have a formal responsibility to develop the curriculum, employees, and the course of education in their schools as contained in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 19 of 2007 concerning Standards for the Management of Primary and Secondary Education. This standard includes program planning, work plan implementation, and student affairs. Discussing women's leadership has to do with discussing gender issues, as stated by Asep that "women's leadership has to do with discussing gender issues with pressure points on women's positions in various lines of life, ranging from views that worry about men's injustice towards women to women's propriety in community duties.<sup>2</sup> Women are often identified with weakness, softness, and social class. Therefore, discrimination always occurs because women are seen as unable to do many things that men can do.

Women's leadership in a patriarchal society is still always a problem, because in general leadership is synonymous with men, this happens because women's leadership still cannot be considered as presenting themselves as ideal leaders.<sup>3</sup> Good leadership is characterized by having a personality as a leader and being able to move and manage the resources owned by the institution according to the changes and needs of the times. On that basis, it is not wrong to say that leaders are a vital part of achieving the optimal goals of the institution, which of course leadership is played by the principal. As a leader in the educational environment, school principals have responsibilities in the implementation of education in schools.

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<sup>2</sup>Asep Kurniawan. (2020) "The Influence of Female Principal Leadership and Teacher Performance at Madrasah Tsanawiyah", *Journal of Equalita* 2.1 (2020): 33.

<sup>3</sup>Budiarta, I. W. (2022). Women's Leadership in the Purusa Kinship System: The Historical Legitimacy of Women's Political Leadership. *Scientific Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(1), 23-33.

The leadership of the school principal is very supportive of the achievement of effective and efficient school management.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, realizing a school into a religious school and producing qualified and competent graduates in accordance with national graduation standards, it is certain that a qualified school principal is also needed. School principals must have a vision and mission as well as a good and quality education management strategy. All decisions and policies, the principal must involve the participation of teachers as a whole. Therefore, the principal also has a role in carrying out supervision to improve and improve the quality of learning in the classroom or at school.

Leadership is also the ability to move, influence, motivate, invite, direct, advise, foster, guide, train, rule, prohibit, and even punish. With the intention that humans as part of the organization are willing to work in order to achieve their own goals and the organization effectively and efficiently. This definition suggests that in leadership there are three elements, namely leaders, followers, and situations.<sup>5</sup>

According to Sutarto as quoted by Yuniar Silaningtyas and Hamdanah, "Leadership is a series of structuring activities in the form of being able to influence the behavior of others in certain situations so that they are willing to work together to achieve the goals that have been set".<sup>6</sup> The leadership of the principal is the most essential element in an educational institution because it has the responsibility as a mediator, motivator, and as a driving force for the community he leads. In addition, the increase in the rate of growth and development of education solely depends on the quality of its leadership.

In general, the role of an educator requires a strong mental, spiritual foundation, and responsibility in managing educational institutions. God instructs man that an educator has the ability to guide others to the right path. This is

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<sup>4</sup>Alhabisy, F., Pettalongi, S. S., & Wandi, W. (2022). "The Role of School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance. *Journal of Educational Management Integration*, 1(1), 11-19."

<sup>5</sup>Bakhtiar, B. (2019). Kategori Kepemimpinan Transformational. *At-Ta'dib: Jurnal Ilmiah Prodi Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 38-47.

<sup>6</sup>Yuniar Silaningtyas and Hamdanah. (2024) "Definition, theory, types, and leadership styles", *Integrated Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal* 8, 6 (2024): 515.

reflected in the words of Allah Q.S. An-Naml /27: 23-24.

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمَلُّكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيتُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَأَلَّهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ

Translation:

"Indeed, I found a woman ruling over them (the inhabitants of the land of Saba'). He was endowed with everything and had a great throne. I (the bird of Hudhud) found him and his people worshipping the sun, not Allah. Satan has adorned their deeds so that they may be seen as beautiful, thus hindering them from the path (of Allah). They don't get clues.

Based on the guidance of Allah SWT in His words, this verse tells the story of a queen who reigned with a large throne, showing that leadership by women is something that is recognized and has happened historically in the Qur'an. However, this verse also reminds us of the importance of true leadership, because in this verse women and their people are lost because they worship other than Allah SWT.

Surah An-Naml verses 23-24 tell about Queen Balqis, a female leader who had great power and authority, ruling with intelligence, wisdom, and independence. This story shows that women have the potential and capability to become effective leaders in social and government contexts. In the context of the Leadership Style of Female Principals, this verse inspires that women can also be wise and influential leaders in improving teacher performance and school management.

The story of Queen Balqis' leadership is also strengthened in Surah Saba' verse 15:

أَفَدْ كَلَّا لِسْبَيَا فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ أَيُّهُ جَنَّنٌ عَنْ يَمِينِ وَشَمَائِلِهِ كُلُّوْا مِنْ رَزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لَهُ أَجْلَدَهُ طَيْبَةً وَرَبُّ عَفْوٌ

Translation:

"Indeed for the Saba' there is a sign of the Lord's power in their dwellings, namely two gardens on the right and on the left. (To them it is said), 'Eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him. (Your land is) a good land, and your Lord is Forgiving.'

This verse describes the prosperity and welfare of the land of Saba' led by Ratu Balqis. The land is called "baldatun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur" a good land with God the Most Forgiving. This shows that leadership based on wisdom, justice, and gratitude will bring prosperity to its people. In this study, the verse is the basis that good female leadership can bring prosperity and progress to the institutions she leads, including educational institutions. Female principals, like Ratu Balqis, can lead wisely, build collaboration, and prioritize the value of gratitude and responsibility in improving teacher performance.

In general, female principals carry out their duties and obligations to develop and advance the school with high responsibility and commitment, by working hard and making many breakthroughs to build a good work culture. According to Wardani, female school principals are able to approach their subordinates psychologically to understand the nature and personality of teachers in order to motivate teacher performance.

According to Fitriani, in order to achieve good leadership, there are several characters that must exist in women, these characters are as follows: (1). *Genderless mind* A woman will be successful in leading if she does not have a problem with gender. 2). A female leader must not only be able to govern, she must also know how to look at problems holistically and provide solutions to each problem. 3). Good at choosing priorities and tenacity Being a leader is not easy. Success belongs to those who are good at organizing and prioritizing, and must be tough in every problem. 4). Sociable One of the attitudes that makes women superior to men is their flexible attitude in relationships. 5). Courage Gentleness is indeed synonymous with women, but there are times when women must dare to make firm decisions. 6). Have feminine traits Successful women can't just rely on their feminine side, they have to have a masculine side. 7). Balanced life, Women must be able to balance personal life and work interests.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Fitriani, A. (2015). Women's leadership style. *Journal of Tapis: Journal of Islamic Political Aspirations*, 11(2), 1-22.

According to Ritonga, teacher performance is an achievement achieved as a result of a teacher's work in carrying out the duties and responsibilities imposed on him, according to his authority and ability.<sup>8</sup> According to Damanik, it is stated that performance refers to the level of success in carrying out tasks and the ability to achieve the goals that have been set, meaning that performance is said to be good or successful if the desired goals can be achieved well.<sup>9</sup>

It can be concluded that teacher performance is the result of work or achievements achieved by a teacher in carrying out his duties and responsibilities as an educator. This performance reflects the teacher's behavior when teaching in the classroom according to certain criteria. In addition, the performance of teachers can be said to be good or successful if the tasks carried out are able to achieve the goals that have been set.

The objectives of the leadership style of female school principals in improving teacher performance are: (a). to find out the leadership style of female school principals in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency. (b). to find out the supporting and inhibiting factors of female school principals in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency.

In practice, the implementation of the leadership of school principals, especially women's leadership, does not always run without challenges. In many education units, female principals still face various structural and cultural barriers, such as gender stereotypes, differences in teacher character, administrative burden, and limited school facilities and infrastructure. This condition also has the potential to affect the effectiveness of leadership in improving teacher performance. Therefore, an empirical study is needed that is able to clearly describe how the leadership of female principals is carried out in the context of a particular school, including the factors that support and hinder its implementation.

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<sup>8</sup>Ritonga, T. N. (2021). Teacher's Professional Experience and Competence on Teacher Performance. *Al-Liqo: Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(2), 195-216.

<sup>9</sup>Damanik, R. (2019). "Pengaruh Disiplin Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Guru. *Serunai: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(2), 163-170. <https://doi.org/10.37755/sjip.v5i2.231>"

SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja Donggala Regency is one of the schools led by female principals and shows interesting leadership dynamics to be studied. Based on initial observations, female principals at this school apply a participatory, communicative, and teacher-oriented leadership style. The principal not only plays the role of administrator, but also as a guide and motivator for teachers in improving the quality of learning. However, the extent to which this leadership style contributes to improved teacher performance, as well as what factors strengthen and inhibit it, has not been systematically documented through scientific research.

The results of the search for previous research show that studies on the leadership of school principals are still generally general and have not specifically examined the leadership of female principals in the empirical context of schools, especially in the regions. In addition, research linking women's leadership to improving teacher performance is still relatively limited, so there is a research *gap* that needs to be filled through a more in-depth and contextual study. This research is here to fill this gap by directly examining the leadership practices of female school principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency.

Based on this background, this research is important and relevant to be carried out, not only as an academic contribution in the development of educational leadership studies, but also as a practical reference for school principals, supervisors, and education stakeholders in developing effective and inclusive leadership models. Therefore, this study aims to (1) describe the leadership style of female principals in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency, and (2) identify the supporting and inhibiting factors of female school principals' leadership in improving teacher performance.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method that aims to gain a deep understanding of the role of female school principals' leadership styles in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study emphasizes the disclosure of the meaning, process, and dynamics of leadership in the natural context of the school, as experienced and perceived by the research subject.

The main subject in this study was the female principal of SMP Negeri 5 Sirena, while the research informants were determined purposively by considering their involvement and knowledge of the principal's leadership practices. The informants consist of classroom teachers, subject teachers, and school staff who act as supporting informants. The selection of informants is intended to obtain comprehensive and balanced data related to the implementation of leadership and its impact on teacher performance.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with principals and teachers to explore information about transformational leadership practices that include the dimensions *of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration*), as well as to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in improving teacher performance. Observations were made directly on the principal's leadership activities, such as the implementation of academic supervision, coordination meetings, teacher discussions, and daily interactions between the principal and teachers and staff, in order to see the compatibility between the informant's statements and real practices in the field. Documentation is used as supporting data which includes school program documents, meeting minutes, supervision schedules, as well as photos of teacher discussion activities and the learning process in the classroom.

The data obtained was analyzed interactively and continuously by referring to the Miles and Huberman analysis model, which includes the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.<sup>10</sup> At the data reduction stage, the researcher selects and focuses data that is relevant to the focus of the research. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative that is systematically compiled based on the dimensions of transformational leadership and the categories of supporting and inhibiting factors of leadership. The final stage is carried out by drawing conclusions based on the

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<sup>10</sup>Qomaruddin, Q., & Sa'diyah, H. (2024). "A theoretical study of data analysis techniques in qualitative research: Spradley, Miles and Huberman perspectives. *Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration*, 1(2), 77-84."

patterns, relationships, and tendencies of the data that emerge, and verifying them continuously during the research process.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques, namely by comparing data obtained from various informants and various data collection techniques. In addition, member checks are also carried out by reconfirming the results of the interview and the researcher's interpretation to the informant, so that the research findings truly accurately reflect the conditions and experiences of the research subjects.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***The Role of Female Principals' Leadership Styles in Improving Teacher Performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency***

Based on the results of all interviews from school principals, the role of female principals' leadership styles in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, Donggala Regency was analyzed using the Grand Theory of Transformational Leadership Bernard M. Bass.<sup>11</sup> This theory emphasizes the ability of leaders to change their subordinates' values, attitudes, and behaviors to align with organizational goals through ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention. In the leadership of female principals, these four dimensions are strengthened by the distinctive character of women who are participatory, democratic, charismatic, and competent.

#### ***Idealized Influence (Kharismatics)***

Transformational leadership is characterized by the leader's ability to be an exemplary figure and role model who is respected by his subordinates. In the context of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja, charismatic traits can be seen from authority, assertiveness, and personality that are respected by both teachers

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<sup>11</sup>Harsoyo, R. (2022). Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory and its application in improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 3(2), 247-262.

and students. The principal not only rules, but also sets a real example through discipline, responsibility, and commitment to duty.

Based on the results of the author's observations, it shows that teachers have high respect and trust in the principal. He always attends early, monitors learning activities, and reprimands teachers in a polite but firm manner if there is a violation of discipline. His calm, polite, but firm attitude fosters a sense of reluctance and motivates teachers to imitate his discipline and work ethic. Thus, the charisma of the principal is an important factor in improving the performance and enthusiasm of teachers in schools.

As a school principal, Darmawati explained that being a leader is not only regulating, but also an example that teachers and students can follow. He emphasized that the charisma of leaders is born from consistency of attitude, not only from position. Interview results:

"I always try to be an example first before demanding teachers. If I demand discipline, then I myself must come on time first and show seriousness in work. Teachers and students will see from actions, not just from words. In reprimanding, I also try to use good language, not to bring it down, so that they still feel respected. I believe that if we lead with a balanced heart and firmness, everything will go well".

As a classroom teacher, Nursusanti considers that the principal's charisma is reflected in the way he leads without having to impose his will. He was respected not because of the authority of his position, but because of his real example. Interview results:

"In my opinion, the principal is a very authoritative figure. He doesn't talk much, but his every action always sets an example. We as teachers feel embarrassed if we arrive late, because he always comes early. If there is a mistake, he does not immediately get angry, but reprimands in a good way and provides a solution. It makes us feel valued, but also motivated to be better. Sometimes we ourselves are motivated to follow his orderly and responsible way of working."

These findings show that the dimension of *idealized influence* in transformational leadership is manifested in the leadership practices of female

principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja. Observation and interview data indicate that the charisma of school principals does not come from structural power, but from consistent behavior, integrity, and continuous example. This is in line with transformational leadership theory which emphasizes that effective leaders are able to build trust and respect for subordinates through ethical behavior and personal commitment, so that subordinates are encouraged to internalize the values exemplified by the leader.<sup>12</sup> In this context, time discipline, respectful way of communication, and proportional assertiveness are transformational mechanisms that affect teachers' attitudes and performance.

Furthermore, the linkage between field findings and theory shows that the charisma of school principals serves as a catalyst for changes in work culture in schools. Teachers are not only obedient because of formal obligations, but are intrinsically motivated to improve professionalism because of the existence of a leader figure who can be used as a moral and professional reference. This condition reflects transformational leadership principles that lead to changes in subordinate values, attitudes, and motivations, rather than just the achievement of short-term targets. Thus, the leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja can be understood as an effective transformational leadership practice, especially in the aspect of ideal influence (charisma), which contributes directly to the continuous improvement of work ethic and teacher performance.

### ***Inspirational Motivation (Participatory)***

This dimension describes the leader's ability to inspire his subordinates through vision, mission, and spirit of teamwork. In this case, the female principal at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja showed a participatory style, namely involving teachers in school planning and decision-making.

Based on the results of the author's observations, it shows that the principal routinely holds coordination meetings with all teachers to discuss school programs,

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<sup>12</sup>Variani, H., Al Qadri, H., & Nellitawati, N. (2024). The influence of transformational leadership on human resource development in an educational unit. *Academy of Education Journal*, 15(1), 991-1000

extracurricular activities, and learning quality improvements. Each teacher is given the opportunity to express new opinions and ideas. In the forum, the principal was open and appreciated input from all parties. Teachers feel involved and have a shared responsibility in achieving the vision and mission of the school. This has an impact on increasing work morale, motivation, and a sense of belonging to the school institution.

As a leader, Darmawati explained that she tries to foster a spirit of togetherness by always inviting teachers to be involved in every school policy. He believes that decisions taken together will be easier to accept and implemented with full responsibility. Interview results:

"I don't want to work alone in leading the school. Every program we make, both academic and non-academic activities, I always talk about with the teachers. In meetings, I always ask for their opinion first before deciding. In this way, they feel like they belong to this school. If they are involved, they are usually also more enthusiastic about carrying out the decisions that have been made together."

He also added that teachers' involvement in decision-making is a form of appreciation for their competence and experience in the field. Interview results:

"Teachers have hands-on experience in the classroom, so their input is very important. I am always open to new ideas from them, especially if the goal is to improve the quality of learning. If there is a good idea, I support it and help realize it. I want to create a democratic but still directed work environment".

As a classroom teacher, Nursusanti said that the principal's participatory leadership style makes teachers feel appreciated and more excited. He feels that every school decision is never taken unilaterally, but through open deliberation. Interview results:

"We as teachers feel very appreciated because the Principal always involves us in meetings and decision-making. He never made a decision without first listening to our opinions. If there is a new program, he first asks how the teachers are ready, what are the obstacles, and what are the solutions. So we feel involved and considered important. This makes us more enthusiastic about carrying out our duties because we feel responsible for the results of joint decisions."

The findings on this dimension show that the leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja reflects the aspect of *inspirational motivation* in

transformational leadership theory. Observation and interview data show that school principals are able to build a collective work spirit through participatory communication of vision and mission, so that teachers not only understand the school's goals, but also feel an important part of its achievements. The involvement of teachers in program planning and decision-making serves as a means to unify perceptions, foster optimism, and strengthen a shared commitment to the direction of school development.

The linkage between field findings and theory shows that the participatory leadership style applied by the principal becomes an effective inspirational mechanism. In the perspective of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation arises when leaders are able to instill meaning in the work and foster a belief that shared goals can be achieved through collaborative work. This is reflected in the increase in motivation, sense of belonging, and responsibility of teachers towards the school program. Thus, the principal's leadership practice is not only oriented towards administrative achievement, but also on strengthening the collective spirit and professional commitment of teachers, which are important prerequisites for improving the quality of learning and the sustainability of the school's vision.



Figure 1. Subject Teacher Discussion Activities

#### ***Intellectual Stimulation (Competent)***

The Intellectual Stimulation dimension is one of the main characteristics of the transformational leadership style. This dimension describes a leader's ability to encourage his subordinates to think critically, innovatively, and creatively in completing tasks and facing various organizational challenges. Leaders who have

this ability not only give orders, but also build an environment that motivates their subordinates to dare to put forward ideas, innovate, and find effective solutions to the problems they face. In the leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirena, the application of intellectual stimulation is seen through strong professional, social, and managerial competencies. School principals are able to manage the institution systematically, create a productive work atmosphere, and provide support and encouragement for teachers to continue to develop. He not only acts as a supervisor, but also as a mentor, motivator, and inspirer for teachers and staff at the school.

Based on the results of the author's observations, the principal consistently conducts academic supervision of teachers. In every supervision activity, he does not judge unilaterally, but prioritizes a dialogical approach. Teachers are given the opportunity to explain the obstacles and challenges they face in the learning process, then together find the best solution. The principal is also active in providing constructive feedback and offering new ideas that can be implemented in the classroom. In addition, the principal has high initiative in developing internal training for teachers. This training focuses on improving professional competence, such as the preparation of lesson plans based on the Independent Curriculum, the use of digital learning media, and the implementation of innovative teaching strategies based on projects and technology. Through this activity, teachers not only gain new knowledge, but are also encouraged to think more creatively in designing learning that is interesting for students.

As the leader of an educational institution, Darmawati, the Principal of SMP Negeri 5 Sirena, said that one of the focuses of her leadership is to improve teachers' abilities through continuous training and guidance. He emphasized the importance of teachers becoming lifelong learners to be able to adapt to the times. Interview results:

“I always tell teachers that the world of education is now much different. If we don't want to learn, we will be left behind. Therefore, I encourage teachers to participate in training and seminars, both held outside and at their own schools. We also often hold small trainings, for example how to make simple digital learning media. I want teachers to not only teach, but also continue to innovate and think creatively.”

Furthermore, he explained his approach in academic supervision which is not only a formality, but also an in-depth coaching venue. Interview results:

“I don't want supervision to be just an annual formality. I went directly to class, saw how the teacher taught, and after that I had a discussion. If there is something missing, I convey it in a good way. For example, I help give examples of learning media or strategies that can be used. That way, teachers feel supported, not judged. As a result, they become more confident and eager to improve the way they teach.”



Figure 2. Learning Activities in the Classroom

Findings on the *intellectual stimulation dimension* show that the leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja is in line with the main principles of transformational leadership which emphasizes the development of teachers' critical and innovative thinking capacity.<sup>13</sup> Observation and interview data indicate that the principal does not position himself as the sole controller, but rather as a facilitator of professional learning for teachers. A dialogical and reflective approach to academic supervision allows teachers to identify learning problems independently, analyze their causes, and formulate alternative solutions collaboratively. This pattern is in line with the theoretical view that intellectual stimulation encourages a change in the way teachers think from just curriculum implementers to adaptive and reflective learning designers.

Furthermore, the linkage between empirical and theoretical findings shows that the initiative of school principals in organizing internal training and encouraging teacher participation in professional development activities is a tangible form of sustained intellectual stimulation. Within the framework of

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<sup>13</sup>Puspasari, M. D. (2023). The Application of Transformational Leadership in the Management of Modern Madrasas. *Refresh: Management of Islamic Education*, 1(2), 40-47.

transformational leadership, leaders play a role in challenging old practices that are less relevant and opening up space for pedagogical innovation. Training on the Independent Curriculum, the use of digital media, and project-based learning strategies are a vehicle for teachers to develop creativity and professional competence. Thus, the leadership of the principal not only contributes to improving the individual abilities of teachers, but also builds an organizational learning culture that encourages innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement of the quality of learning.

#### ***Individualized Consideration (Democratic)***

This dimension reflects the leader's attention to the needs and potential of each individual in the organization. The female principal at SMP Negeri 5 Sirena applies a democratic style in fostering relationships with teachers and school staff.

Based on the results of the author's observations, it shows that in daily interactions, the principal is open and friendly to teachers. He always provides a space for dialogue if teachers face difficulties in the learning process or personal affairs. The principal does not discriminate between teachers based on their tenure or position, but pay attention according to their individual needs. For example, newly placed teachers receive special guidance, while senior teachers are given the trust to be mentors for new teachers. This democratic and empathetic attitude creates a harmonious work atmosphere, increases loyalty, and fosters a sense of comfort and responsibility at work.

As the leader of an educational institution, Darmawati, the Principal of SMP Negeri 5 Sirena, revealed that in leading, she tries to apply an open and humanist approach. He assessed that each teacher has its own uniqueness and challenges, so an effective leadership approach must be flexible and understand individual needs.

“I try to be a leader who can listen. Not all teachers have the same problem, so my approach has to be different as well. If there is a teacher who has difficulty managing his time due to family matters, I try to help by adjusting his teaching schedule. If anyone feels less confident in class, I accompany and encourage them. I want all teachers to feel cared for, because I believe when they feel comfortable, they will work better.”

He also emphasized the importance of democratic leadership in creating a harmonious and productive work environment.

"I don't want there to be any distance between the principal and the teacher. I try to discuss every school decision together. If there is a meeting, all teachers can express their opinions. Sometimes I also ask for advice directly from them, especially those who are more experienced in their field. I believe that decisions taken together will be easier to execute because everyone feels involved and responsible."

The findings on the *individualized consideration* dimension show that the leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja is in line with transformational leadership principles that emphasize attention to the individual needs, potentials, and conditions of subordinates. Observation and interview data indicate that school principals view teachers not just as task-takers, but as individuals with different backgrounds, challenges, and capacities. The democratic and humanist approach applied allows the creation of working relationships based on trust, openness, and empathy, so that teachers feel valued personally and professionally.<sup>14</sup>

The linkage between field findings and theory suggests that the individual attention given by school principals serves as a transformational mechanism in improving teacher loyalty and performance. In the framework of transformational leadership, *individualized consideration* is reflected through the practice of mentoring, trust-building, and ongoing emotional and professional support. Specialized mentorship for new teachers and the empowerment of senior teachers as mentors not only strengthen individual competencies, but also build a collaborative culture in the school environment. Thus, the leadership of the principal at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja is not only oriented towards achieving institutional goals, but also on holistic human resource development, which ultimately contributes to the creation of a harmonious, productive, and sustainable

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<sup>14</sup> Hadi, S. N. F. A., & Darmiyanti, A. (2025). Strategi Pengelolaan Kelas Humanis Dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar Di Sekolah Menegah Atas. *Jurnal Ilmiah Penelitian Mahasiswa*, 3(4), 52-60.

work climate.

### ***Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Leadership of Female Principals in Improving Teacher Performance at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja***

#### **Supporting Factors**

The leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja is inseparable from a number of supporting factors that strengthen the effectiveness of their role in improving teacher performance. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, these supporting factors include internal support from teachers and school staff, the principal's charismatic and communicative personality, harmonious relationships with the community and school committees, and qualified professional and managerial abilities. The principal actively engages in a personal and emotional approach to teachers through informal activities such as lunch together, light after-hours meetings, and casual weekly evaluation meetings. This creates a familiar working atmosphere and fosters mutual trust among the school residents.

External factors also play an important role, especially support from the school committee and the surrounding community. The principal is able to establish good communication with community leaders, parents of students, and village officials. Another factor that helps strengthen the leadership of the principal is his professional competence and personal charisma.

#### **Inhibiting Factors**

Although the leadership of female principals at SMP Negeri 5 Sirenja has shown effectiveness and success in creating a harmonious and productive work environment, in practice it is inseparable from various obstacles that affect the leadership process and improve teacher performance.

These obstacles are technical, administrative, and personal, which if not managed properly can hinder the optimization of performance and the effectiveness of school program implementation. The most dominant obstacles include limited facilities and infrastructure, a fairly heavy administrative burden on teachers, and

differences in character, motivation, and level of discipline between individual teachers.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the leadership of female principals plays a significant role in improving teacher performance through the application of transformational leadership styles that include charismatic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention. School principals show an example through discipline, responsibility, and consistency of attitude so that they become role models for teachers, as well as inspire and actively involve teachers in the planning and implementation of school programs. Through dialogical academic supervision and continuous professional development, principals encourage teachers to think critically, innovate, and improve learning competencies. A democratic and humanist approach that pays attention to the individual needs of teachers helps create a harmonious work climate, increasing motivation, loyalty, and a sense of responsibility. The success of this leadership is supported by the cooperation and solidarity of school residents as well as effective communication with the community and school committees, although they are still faced with limitations in infrastructure, administrative burden of teachers, differences in character and motivation, as well as limited budgets and educators, so that continuous support is needed so that teacher performance improvement can take place optimally.

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