



The Integrated Model of Transformational Leadership and Managerial Competence for Sustainable School Change: A Qualitative Study in Simeulue Regency

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to analyze the integration of transformational leadership and principals' managerial competence in managing change towards effective schools. The focus of this research is directed at the ability of school principals to plan, implement, and evaluate school programs in a participatory and adaptive manner. **Method:** This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis techniques. Data were obtained from three public junior high schools in Simeulue Regency and analyzed interactively through the stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. **Results:** The results show that school principals have strong managerial competence and are able to apply transformational leadership to every aspect of school management. School principals play an active role in building collaboration, providing motivation, and creating a reflective work culture oriented towards quality improvement. The integration of these two aspects contributes to increasing the effectiveness of schools and to creating an adaptive and innovative environment. **Novelty:** This study produces an integrative leadership model that combines managerial skills and transformational leadership as the basis for sustainable school change management. This model shows that the success of schools does not only depend on efficient management, but also on inspiring and collaborative leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars for the development of competitive and characterizing human resources. Amid the demands of globalization and the acceleration of digital transformation, educational institutions must be able to adapt to changes in the increasingly complex social, economic, and technological environment. As formal educational institutions, schools are a strategic arena for the process of change. In this context, the principal plays a central role as a leader of learning and change agents who are responsible for directing all resources to achieve educational goals effectively and sustainably.

A principal's leadership is not only measured by his ability to carry out administrative functions but also by his ability to inspire, empower, and manage change (Corrigan & Merry, 2022). In line with this view (Bass & Avolio, 1994), transformational leadership emphasizes the ability of leaders to cultivate intrinsic motivation, build trust, and mobilize subordinates through shared visions and values. Principals with a transformational spirit not only maintain the stability of the system but also create updates and innovations in the learning process and school management (Fadhli, 2016).

On the other hand, the success of school leadership is also highly determined by the managerial competence possessed by the principal (Zhahira et al., 2022), as stipulated in Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007. This competency includes the ability to plan work

programs, organize resources, direct the implementation of activities, and conduct supervision and evaluation. The integration between transformational leadership and managerial competence will result in a leadership model that is not only visionary, but also structured and measurable in achieving effective school change (Yang, 2014).

Changes in educational organizations cannot be separated from the perspective of change management. The Eight-Step Change Model theory (Kotter & Cohen, 2012) emphasizes the importance of creating a sense of urgency, building coalitions, developing a vision for change, and institutionalizing change into an organizational culture. Fullan (2002) also emphasized that sustainable educational changes require moral leadership and collective commitment from all school residents. Therefore, school principals must be able to drive change that prioritizes collaboration, innovation, and sustainable reflection.

In the context of Junior High School (SMP) in Simeulue Regency, Aceh Province, empirical phenomena show that there is a variation in the level of effectiveness between schools. Some junior high schools show significant progress through adaptive, innovative, and collaborative principal leadership practices, while others still face stagnation despite having adequate resources. Based on the initial findings in the field, school principals have made efforts to design school plans with teachers and development teams, distribute tasks proportionally, create a conducive work climate, and carry out periodic program evaluations. However, obstacles remain in the orientation of vision and mission, the capacity of human resources, and the limitations of supporting facilities that impact the effectiveness of change management in schools.

Previous studies have reinforced the urgency of this topic. Pratiwi et al. (2025) found that the principal's strategy in change management includes three main stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. Novarina et al. (2023) emphasized that the managerial function of school principals has a direct effect on improving teacher performance. Harapan and Wardiah (2021) highlight that the managerial competence of school principals contributes to the quality of education. However, most of the research is descriptive and separates the leadership and management aspects. Studies that comprehensively link transformational leadership, change management, and school effectiveness are still limited, especially in the context of junior high schools in archipelagic areas, such as Simeulue, which face geographical challenges and limited educational resources.

Thus, previous studies have shown the importance of leadership and managerial competence, yet several aspects remain insufficiently explored. Most existing studies focus only on the influence of managerial competence on teacher performance or school quality, without examining how these competencies interact with organizational change dynamics. Furthermore, the integration of Transformational Leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), Change Management models (Fullan, 2002); (Kotter & Cohen, 2012), and School Effectiveness frameworks (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) into a unified conceptual approach has rarely been addressed. Empirically, studies in archipelagic regions such as Simeulue Regency are also scarce, even though geographical isolation and limited resources create distinctive leadership challenges. Therefore, this study aims to fill these theoretical and contextual gaps by analyzing the integration of transformational leadership and principals' managerial competence in managing educational change toward effective schools in Simeulue Regency.

Thus, this article is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a conceptual model of educational leadership, as well as a practical contribution to increasing the capacity of school principals to manage change and innovation towards an effective, adaptive, and sustainable school.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership focuses on a leader's ability to motivate, inspire, and foster mutual commitment to achieve organizational goals. Bass and Avolio (1994) defined transformational leadership as a leadership style that can change the values, beliefs, and needs of subordinates so that they work beyond their personal interests for the success of the organization. The leadership model has four main dimensions.

1. Idealized Influence is the ability of leaders to be moral and ethical examples that are trusted by subordinates.
2. Inspirational Motivation is the ability to create a compelling vision and inspire members of the organization.
3. Intellectual Stimulation, the ability to encourage creativity and innovation in problem solving.
4. Individualized Consideration, personal attention to needs, aspirations, and the development of subordinate individuals.

In the context of education, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) emphasized that transformational leadership of school principals enhances school effectiveness through teacher empowerment, collaborative culture development, and increased work motivation. Transformational principals not only perform administrative duties but also cultivate an educational vision that moves all school members to innovate.

More analytically, transformational leadership acts as a catalyst that drives change by influencing teachers' internal motivation. However, the realization of this vision requires an operational mechanism managerial competence that translates these abstract inspirations into structured programs, concrete planning documents (RKS/RKAS), and coordinated actions. Hence, transformational leadership provides the why (purpose and inspiration), while managerial competence provides the how (process and implementation).

B. Principal's Managerial Competence

The principal's managerial competence is the ability and skill to manage all school resources effectively to achieve educational goals. Based on Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2007, the managerial competence of school principals includes the following:

1. Planning school programs, both short-term and long-term
2. Organizing human and non-human resources to support school activities
3. Carrying out activities efficiently and effectively.
4. Conducting supervision and evaluation of all programs; and
5. Follow up on the results of the evaluation as an effort to improve the quality of the school.

Principals with strong managerial competence mobilize all elements of the school based on effectiveness, accountability, and transparency. According to (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006), effective management fosters a healthy organizational culture, coordination, and rational decision-making.

In the integrative perspective of this study, managerial competence serves as the operational extension of transformational leadership. The Inspirational Motivation dimension where the leader communicates a shared vision is realized through the structured preparation of the RKS and RKAS, which translate abstract goals into measurable school programs. The Idealized Influence dimension is reflected in transparent task division and delegation mechanisms that reinforce fairness and trust. Meanwhile, Intellectual Stimulation manifests in participatory planning meetings and adaptive revisions to school programs, ensuring that the managerial process remains dynamic and innovative. Thus, managerial competence does not stand apart from leadership; it materializes the transformational vision into actionable systems that sustain school effectiveness.

C. Change Management

Changes in educational organizations demand visionary and adaptive leadership. Fullan (2002) explained that educational change is a complex process that requires the involvement of all the school components. There were three main stages in the change process.

1. Initiation refers to the recognition and determination of the need for change.
2. Implementation, namely the implementation of programs and change strategies
3. Institutionalization is the cultivation and strengthening of the results of change so that it is sustainable.

Kotter and Cohen (2012) proposed an Eight-Step Change Process model that emphasizes the importance of strategic steps in managing organizational change, namely, creating a sense of urgency, forming leadership coalitions, developing a vision and change strategy, communicating vision, empowering employees, achieving short-term wins, consolidating results, and instituting changes in organizational culture.

In the context of schools, effective principals must be able to manage change by involving teachers, staff, and students in the transformation process. Leaders who understand the principles of change management can minimize resistance, accelerate adaptation, and innovate a part of the school's culture.

D. Effective Schools

The concept of an effective school develops from the idea that the quality of a school is not only measured by physical means and curriculum but also by the extent to which the learning process and school management can achieve optimal results. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) and Lezotte (2011) stated that effective schools have the following characteristics:

1. Clear vision and mission understood by all school residents
2. Strong instructional and transformational leadership.
3. Positive and collaborative work climates.
4. High expectations for student achievement.
5. Continuous evaluation and feedback on the learning process.

An effective school is also characterized by the active participation of all school citizens in achieving educational goals as well as the ability of school organizations to adapt to the demands of external environmental changes (Palumbo & Manna, 2019).

E. Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework describes the integrative relationship between transformational leadership, principals' managerial competence, change management, and school effectiveness. Conceptually, transformational leadership, as described by Bass and Avolio (1994), through the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, is the main foundation that strengthens the managerial competence of school principals as regulated in Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007. This managerial competence includes the principal's ability to plan, organize, implement, and evaluate school programs effectively. Furthermore, these competencies play an important role in the implementation of change management based on the models of Fullan (2002) and Kotter (2012), which include the stages of initiation, implementation, and institutionalization as a strategy to deal with the dynamics of educational change. Through planned and sustainable change management, school principals can direct their institutions towards school effectiveness, as stated by Leithwood (2006) and Lezotte (2010), which is characterized by strong leadership, a positive work climate, teacher-student participation, and continuous evaluation and innovation. Thus, this conceptual model shows that transformational leadership has a direct influence on managerial competence and change management as well as an indirect influence on school effectiveness through the mediation mechanism of the two variables.

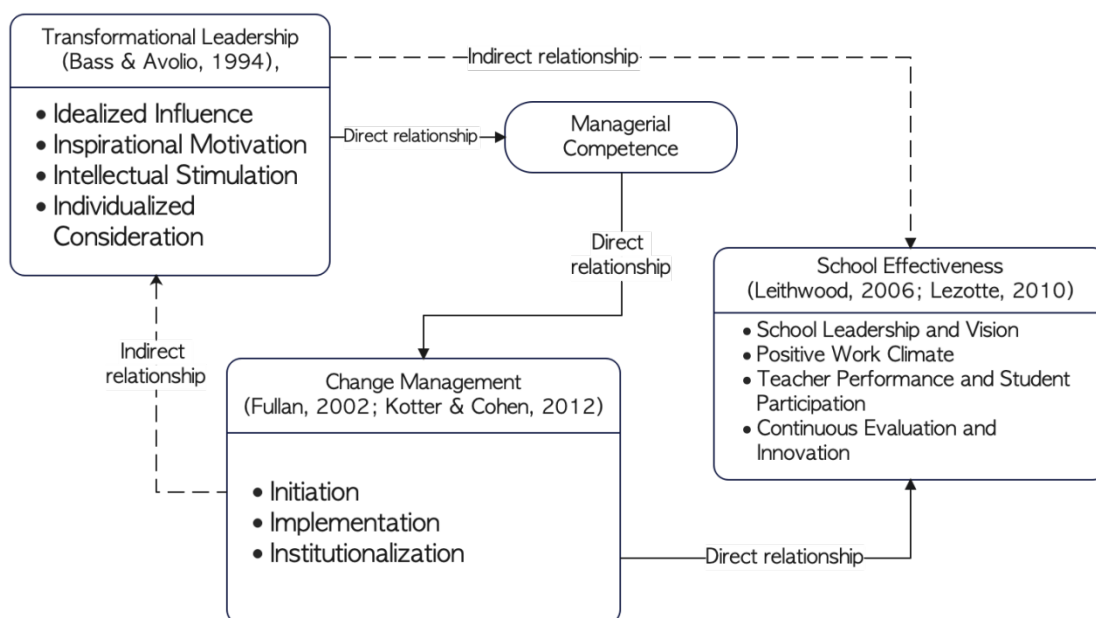


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Design and Research Approach

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive statistics. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research was to understand in depth how school principals implement managerial competence in managing changes towards effective schools. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), a qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena based on direct experience

of the research subject. In this context, researchers play the role of the main instrument in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in the field.

The research design referred to Huberman's (2019) interactive analysis model, which includes three main components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. This design is appropriate for identifying the patterns, strategies, and practices of principals in managing school changes.

B. Location and Research Subject

The research was carried out in several Junior High Schools in the Simeulue Regency, Aceh Province. This location was chosen because it shows the variation in the level of school effectiveness and the readiness of school principals to face changes in quality management-based education.

The subjects in this study were the Principal of SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Timur, Principal of SMP Negeri 7 Simeulue Timur, Principal of SMPN 1 Teupah Barat, Teacher Council, School Supervisors, and Head of the Education Office. The selection of subjects was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, which involved selecting informants who were considered to have the best understanding of the context and their role in the managerial process and school change.

Table 1. Subjek Penelitian

Nu.	Subject Categories	Name/ Job Title	School/ Agency	Role in Research	Reasons for Selection
1	Key Informant	Principal (KS1 - SY)	State Junior High School 1 East Simeulue	Provide key information related to the implementation of managerial competencies in planning, implementation, and evaluation	Have first-hand experience in leading school change towards effective schools
2	Key Informant	Principal (KS2 - SF)	State Junior High School 7, East Simeulue	Provide information on leadership strategies and the implementation of resource management	Principals who are active in managerial innovation and teacher involvement
3	Key Informant	Principal (KS3 - DA)	State Junior High School 1 West Teupah	Provide views on the evaluation and supervision of school activities	Mewakili konteks geografis dan karakteristik sekolah yang berbeda
4	Supporting Informant	6 Teachers	The three schools above (SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur, SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur, SMPN 1 Teupah Barat)	Provide practical insights into the principal's policies and their impact on the implementation of duties	Teachers are directly involved in the implementation of school policies and programs
5	Additional Informants	School Superintendent	Simeulue Regency Education Office	Provide an assessment of the supervision, monitoring, and coaching of the principal	Acting as an external supervisor who assesses the performance of the principal

Nu.	Subject Categories	Name / Job Title	School/ Agency	Role in Research	Reasons for Selection
6	Key Informant	Head of the Simeulue Regency Education Office	Simeulue Regency Education Office	Provide context for local policies on school management and educational effectiveness	Have authority in setting and evaluating education policies at the district level

C. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was carried out gradually and systematically to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the application of transformational leadership and the managerial competence of school principals in managing changes towards effective schools. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. These three techniques are used triangulatively so that the data obtained can corroborate, complement, and validate each other.

1. In-depth Interview

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore principals' views, experiences, and strategies in implementing transformational leadership values and managing changes in the school. The interview guidelines were prepared based on the four main dimensions of theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and the domain of managerial competence of school principals in Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007, so that each question was directed at understanding the relationship between integrated theories.

Table 2. Interview and Informant Focus

Data Focus	Aspects Explored	Key Informant
Managerial Planning	The principal's strategy in preparing a plan for school change and development	Principal, Vice-Principal
Managerial Implementation	Implementation of policies and division of tasks in managing schools	Principal, Teacher, Administrative Staff
Program Evaluation	The principal's mechanism in assessing the success of the program	Principal, School Superintendent
Transformational Leadership	The form of inspiration, motivation, and empowerment provided by the principal	Principal, Senior Teacher
Change Management	The school's adaptation process to new policies and external challenges	Principal, Teacher, School Superintendent
School Effectiveness	The impact of changes on the quality of learning and school culture	Principals, Teachers, Education Office
Systemic Policy and Support	Local government policy towards school development	Simeulue Regency Education Office

2. Participatory Observation

Observations were carried out directly on the activities of school principals, teachers, and staff during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the school programs. The goal is to determine the extent to which managerial behavior and transformational leadership styles are implemented in the school's real context.

The type of observation used is non-active participatory observation, in which the researcher is present in school activities. The researcher used a structured observation sheet that contained indicators of the four dimensions of transformational leadership and

five aspects of managerial competence. Field notes were used to document real behavior, social interactions, and the work atmosphere at school. The results of the observations were then compared with those of the interviews to assess the consistency between data sources and identify managerial phenomena that were not verbally expressed by the informant.

3. Documentation Studies

A documentation study was conducted to obtain secondary administrative and factual data on the implementation of school management and policy changes. The documents analyzed included the following:

- a. School Work Plan (RKS) and School Activity Plan and Budget (RKAS)
- b. Principal and teacher performance reports,
- c. Supervision results
- d. Meeting minutes, decision letters, and school innovation program reports,
- e. Data on academic and non-academic achievement of schools.

Document analysis was performed to confirm the primary data obtained from the interviews and observations. Documents are also used to track historical evidence of changes in managerial policies and practices so that the results of the research have an objective and verified basis.

4. Data Triangulation and Validation

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this study used data triangulation and validation strategies proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Moleong (2017). The principle is to conduct cross-examinations between sources, techniques, and times so that the results of the research truly reflect the conditions of the field objectively.

a. Triangulation Source

Source triangulation was carried out by comparing and verifying information from various key informants.

- 1) School principals (three junior high schools in Simeulue Regency) as the main actors in the application of transformational leadership and managerial competence
- 2) Teachers and education staff, who provide operational perspectives and perceptions of the changes led by the principal
- 3) School supervisors, who assess the consistency of managerial practices in terms of external supervision
- 4) The Simeulue Regency Education Office is a source of policy data and provides systemic support for developing effective schools.

The data obtained from each group of informants were compared to find patterns of similarities and differences in perceptions to obtain a complete picture of the mechanisms of leadership and change management in schools.

b. Triangulation Technique

The researchers combined the three main data collection techniques:

- 1) In-depth interviews, to explore the understanding and subjective experiences of school principals and other actors towards the change process
- 2) Participatory observation to see firsthand managerial behavior, communication patterns, and the dynamics of change in the school environment.

- 3) Documentation to check physical evidence in the form of School Work Plan (RKS), RKAS, meeting minutes, supervision reports, and photos of school activities and achievements.

The results of each technique were compared and confirmed. For example, the principal's statement about increasing teacher motivation is verified through the observation of teachers' activities in the classroom and performance evaluation documents.

c. Time Triangulation

The data collection process was conducted in three different periods: the beginning, middle, and end of the research. This time triangulation aims to check the consistency of the information obtained and to avoid temporal bias. Changes in informants' answers or behavior over time were analyzed as part of the dynamics of changing school organizations.

d. Validation and Credibility Testing

To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used four validity criteria, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994):

Table 3. Validation Criteria

Validity Criteria	Validation Strategies Carried Out
Credibility	It is carried out through member checks (confirmation of interview results to informants), extension of presence in the field, and triangulation of resources-techniques-time.
Transferability	Provide a thick contextual description of the characteristics of each school so that the results can be applied to similar contexts.
Dependability	Keeps complete records of the research process, including interview transcripts, observation logs, and supporting documents for trail audits.
Confirmability	Avoid researcher bias by including direct citations from informants, cross-validation by supervisors, and academic advisors.

e. Audit Trail and Peer Debriefing

An audit trial was conducted to obtain systematic records of all research steps (observation schedule, field notes, interview transcripts, and analysis codes) and conduct peer debriefing with supervisors and peers to verify the validity of the interpretation.

1. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study was conducted in depth using an interactive analysis model (Huberman, 2019), which was combined with principles of Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory approaches to enhance analytical rigor. Specifically, open and axial coding processes were applied during the data reduction and categorization stages, reflecting the iterative nature of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and the inductive-deductive reasoning cycle typical of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

This combined framework was selected because it provides a comprehensive structure for understanding the relationship between empirical data and theoretical constructs in a repetitive and reflective manner. Thus, while the Huberman model offers an interactive sequence of reduction-display-verification, the thematic and grounded-theory perspectives ensure that the emerging categories and themes are conceptually saturated, theoretically linked, and empirically validated. The analysis is simultaneous with the data collection process, so that the activities of reduction, presentation, and conclusion are not linear, but form a continuous analytical cycle until valid and meaningful findings are obtained.



Data analysis was conducted to reveal the integrative relationship between transformational leadership and the managerial competence of school principals in managing changes in educational organizations that have implications for improving school effectiveness. Therefore, each stage of analysis focuses on identifying patterns, meanings, and relationships between concepts that emerge from field data, whether obtained through interviews, observations, or documentation studies.

a. Data Reduction

The data reduction stage is the process of sorting and focusing attention on data relevant to the focus of the research. The data obtained from the field were selected, simplified, and categorized based on four main constructs: transformational leadership, managerial competence, change management, and school effectiveness.

The researcher conducted an open encoding of interview transcripts and observation notes to find key themes, such as teacher inspiration and motivation, strengthening staff performance, school change planning, managerial coordination, and indicators of school effectiveness success.

Next, axial coding is carried out to connect categories, for example, between the principal's leadership style and effective change management patterns. This reduction process takes place iteratively, meaning that each new data obtained will be studied and compared with previously formed categories until the data reach a saturated condition (data saturation).

b. Data Presentation

After the reduction process, the data is presented in a structured form to make it easier for researchers to trace the patterns of relationships between categories. Data presentation is carried out through thematic tables, analysis matrices, and descriptive narratives that describe the relationship between the theory and field results.

For example, the results of interviews with principals about the dimension of Inspirational Motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994) were associated with managerial practices found in School Work Plan (RKS) documents. The data were then compared with observations of teacher coordination meetings to determine the compatibility between the transformational vision and the implementation of school programs.

The presentation of data is carried out systematically to show the logical flow between leadership variables, managerial competence, and school changes so that empirical causal relationships can be interpreted scientifically.

c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The conclusion and verification stage was carried out from the beginning of the research to the end of the analysis process. Researchers interpret the meaning of data through the process of analytical induction, which involves drawing generalizations from patterns that appear in the field and relating them to theories that are the conceptual basis of research.

Verification was carried out by comparing the interpretation results with empirical data from various sources and collection techniques. This process involves member checking, theory triangulation, and trial audits. The final conclusion is the result of the synthesis of empirical findings with a predetermined theoretical framework. The findings explain how the integration between transformational leadership and

principals' managerial competence contributes to the success of change management and the improvement of school effectiveness at the junior high school level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A. Principal's Competence in Planning School Change

Planning is the main managerial function that determines the direction and success of school activities. Based on the results of the research in three schools, SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Timur, SMP Negeri 7 Simeulue Timur, and SMP Negeri 1 Teupah Barat found that school principals have strong competence in preparing participatory, adaptive, and visionary school planning. The results of interviews, observations, and documentation show that all principals place planning as a strategic first step in managing changes towards effective schools.

In the planning stage, the principal involves all elements of the school, including teachers, education staff, and school committees. At the beginning of every school year, they held an annual work meeting as a forum for the preparation of School Work Plans (RKS) and School Activity Plans and Budgets (RKAS). This process not only serves as an administrative activity but also as a means of building a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for the school's program. The principal plays the role of facilitator and director so that each program that is prepared is in line with the school's vision and mission, and answers the actual needs in the field. This pattern describes inspirational and collaborative leadership, in which the principal motivates teachers to participate actively in every stage of planning.

Table 4. Interview Summary on Planning and Decision Making

Nu	Report	School Origin	Key Quotes	Empirical Meaning
1	KS1 (SY)	SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur	"School planning is always made every year before the start of the school year through teacher council meetings."	The principal emphasized the importance of annual collective planning with teachers.
2	KS2 (SF)	SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur	"The preparation of the planning is carried out by the school development team with the principal, then ratified in a public meeting with teachers, TU, committees, and supervisors."	Planning is open and participatory, fostering a sense of belonging to the program.
3	KS3 (DA)	SMPN 1 Teupah Barat	"Before learning activities start, we prepare a plan with teachers and TU, including the division of tasks and priorities of activities."	The principal integrates academic and non-academic planning from the beginning of the year.

The data in Table 3 show that the planning process throughout the schools is conducted collaboratively and democratically. Planning is not understood as the individual responsibility of the principal but rather as a collective process that involves all school residents. Teachers' involvement in decision making encourages a sense of shared responsibility for the success of the school's program. The principal plays the role of an inspirational leader who fosters a collective spirit in line with the dimension of Inspirational Motivation in transformational leadership.

Furthermore, the results of the study also show that school principals have the ability to adapt to changing situations. Revisions to the annual plan are conducted if there are programs that cannot be implemented or are no longer relevant to field conditions. This revision was drafted through an internal coordination meeting where the principal and teachers reviewed the program and set new priorities. This ability shows the principal's awareness of the dynamics of education policies and changing conditions of resources. Planning with periodic revisions shows that the principal can manage changes reflexively and adaptively.

Table 5. Interview Summary on Planning Flexibility and Revision

Nu	Report	School Origin	Key Quotes	Empirical Meaning
1	KS1 (SY)	SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur	"School plan revisions are always carried out because there are activities that cannot be carried out."	The principal makes periodic corrections to the plan.
2	KS2 (SF)	SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur	"After it is carried out, there are often activities that are no longer suitable, so it needs to be revised to be more realistic."	School principals are responsive to the dynamics of the situation and new policies.
3	KS3 (DA)	SMPN 1 Teupah Barat	"School planning is flexible, it can change depending on the situation and conditions on the ground."	Demonstrate the adaptive ability of the principal in managing change.

Table 4 shows that all principals understood planning as a dynamic document that must be adapted to real conditions. The revision process shows that there is continuous reflection on the effectiveness of the school program. Thus, the principal not only plays the role of administrator but also as a change agent who is able to adjust policies and strategies according to the actual situation of the school.

In general, the results of this study revealed four main trends in the implementation of planning functions. First, the principal implements participatory planning in which all school residents are actively involved in the preparation of RKS and RKAS. Second, each plan is oriented towards the vision and mission of the school, so that the program has a clear strategic direction. Third, school principals show high flexibility in responding to environmental dynamics and changes in educational policies. Fourth, there is an integration between the academic and administrative aspects, which makes planning a coordinating instrument for all school activities.

B. Principal's Competence in the Management and Implementation of School Programs

Implementation of the program is an advanced stage of the planning process that requires the principal's ability to organize resources, motivate educators, and ensure that every activity runs effectively and is directed. Based on the results, the principals in the three schools studied showed good competence in managing the implementation of the program. The principal not only carries out administrative functions but also plays the role of a leader who is able to build collaboration, provide motivation, and optimize the potential of all school residents.

In general, the implementation of school programs in the Simeulue Regency is carried out through a clear task division mechanism, tiered supervision, and empowerment of educators and education personnel. The principal ensures that each teacher understands his/her duties and responsibilities through a coordination meeting at the beginning of the school year. This division of labor is based on individual expertise, experience, and

interests; thus, the implementation of the programme can run more effectively. The results of the interviews show that the principal always emphasizes the importance of teamwork and open communication so that there is no overlap of activities.

Table 6. Summary of the Interview on the Division of Tasks and Resource Organizing

Nu	Report	School Origin	Key Quotes	Empirical Meaning
1	KS1 (SY)	SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur	"Every teacher has main and additional duties. All are divided based on ability so that the work runs smoothly and does not overlap."	The division of tasks is adjusted to individual competencies for work effectiveness.
2	KS2 (SF)	SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur	"We divide the tasks through a teacher's meeting, all are agreed upon together so that the implementation is clear."	Pengorganisasian dilakukan secara terbuka dan berbasis musyawarah.
3	KS3 (DA)	SMPN 1 Teupah Barat	"Teachers are given the opportunity to choose fields according to their abilities, so that they feel comfortable at work."	The principal pays attention to the interest and comfort of the teacher in carrying out the task.

From the results of the interviews, it can be seen that the principal has applied the principle of the right man in the right place to manage human resources in schools. Each teacher is given responsibilities according to their competence and interests so that a sense of comfort and high work productivity is created. The organizing process is carried out through a deliberative forum that shows participatory and democratic leadership. This pattern is in line with the Idealized Influence dimension in transformational leadership, where the leader becomes an example who builds trust and fairness among the organization's members.

In addition to a clear division of duties, the principal also demonstrated the ability to empower teachers and staff through motivation and ongoing moral support. Motivation is not given in the form of coercion, but through a personal approach, appreciation, and recognition of the results of work. The principal strives to create a conducive working atmosphere so that teachers can be creative and innovative in their learning.

Table 7. Interview Summary on Teacher Empowerment and Motivation

Nu	Report	School Origin	Key Quotes	Empirical Meaning
1	KS1 (SY)	SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur	"I always encourage teachers to work sincerely. If you are enthusiastic, the results are also good."	The principal provides moral motivation to increase work morale.
2	KS2 (SF)	SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur	"We give awards and opportunities for outstanding teachers to participate in training."	The principal encourages the professional development of teachers.
3	KS3 (DA)	SMPN 1 Teupah Barat	"We emphasize cooperation more than competition, so that the atmosphere is comfortable."	The principal builds a collaborative and harmonious work culture.

Table 6 shows that school principals played an active role in creating a positive and participatory work climate. The approach used emphasizes humanitarian and trust aspects rather than formal instructions. The principal becomes a role model that fosters

the teacher's internal motivation in line with the dimensions of Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration in transformational leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994) Through this empowerment, teachers feel valued and have room to innovate in implementing school programs.

The implementation of the program also involves periodic internal monitoring and evaluation activities. The principal supervises the implementation of activities, both in the academic and non-academic fields, to ensure the suitability between the plan and the implementation in the field. Each monitoring result is discussed in a monthly routine meeting to find solutions to obstacles that arise during the implementation of the program. This practice shows the consistency of the principal in carrying out the supervisory function as part of the school management cycle.

In general, the results of the study show three main trends in the competence of the management and implementation of school programs. First, school principals are able to organize human and material resources efficiently through a proportional division of tasks. Second, the principal manages to build a collaborative and supportive work culture, which increases teacher participation and responsibility. Third, the principal displays an inspiring and empowering leadership style, thereby creating a harmonious and productive work environment.

The principal's skills in managing program implementation illustrate the integration between managerial competencies and transformational leadership values. The ability to organize resources reflects the managerial aspect, while the effort to motivate, set an example, and empower teachers shows the dimension of transformational leadership. The principal not only runs the program according to the plan, but also inspires the school community to actively contribute to change and improvement of the quality of education.

Overall, the results of the study confirm that the competence of school principals in managing and implementing school programs in Simeulue Regency has been effective. The principal plays the role of the main driver who ensures that each program is implemented according to the purpose, while building a collaborative and performance-oriented organizational culture. The integration of managerial skills and transformational leadership enables school principals to create a productive, adaptive, and focused work environment on improving school effectiveness.

C. Principal's Competence in School Program Evaluation and Supervision

Evaluation and supervision are the final stage of the school management cycle which functions to assess the effectiveness of program implementation and ensure the conformity between the plan and the results achieved. Based on the results of the study, the principals in the three schools where the research was located have shown good ability in carrying out evaluation and supervision functions. They not only assess the success of the program, but also use the results of the evaluation as a basis for making improvements and decision-making in the next period.

Evaluation activities are carried out in a planned and systematic manner. The principal prepares a routine evaluation schedule, both in the middle and at the end of the school year, to assess program achievements in the academic and non-academic fields. The evaluation was carried out through a meeting with the teacher council, the school development team, and supervisors. In this process, the principal emphasized the importance of the involvement of all parties so that the results of the evaluation are more

objective and representative. Each evaluation result is documented as material for the preparation of the next year's School Work Plan.

Table 8. Interview Summary on the Implementation of School Program Evaluation and Supervision

Nu	Report	School Origin	Key Quotes	Empirical Meaning
1	KS1 (SY)	SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur	"We conduct evaluations at the end of each year and also during the activities. The results are discussed with the teacher to see what needs to be improved."	Evaluations are carried out periodically and are used as the basis for program improvement.
2	KS2 (SF)	SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur	"We involve teachers and committees in the evaluation so that the assessment is more objective."	The principal implements participatory evaluation.
3	KS3 (DA)	SMPN 1 Teupah Barat	"We record the results of the supervision and follow up at the next meeting."	Evaluation is carried out systematically and followed up in real terms.

From the results of the interview data in Thick 7, it can be seen that the evaluation process in the three schools has been carried out thoroughly and involves various parties. Evaluation is not only administrative, but serves as a means of reflection to correct weaknesses and maintain success. The principal prioritizes a collaborative approach so that the evaluation process becomes a learning medium for the organization. This pattern shows the existence of reflective abilities that are in line with the dimension of Intellectual Stimulation in transformational leadership, which encourages critical and innovative thinking in solving problems.

In addition to conducting evaluations, the principal also carries out periodic supervision of the implementation of the program. Supervision is carried out through direct observation in the classroom, monitoring of school activities, and reports on teachers' work. This supervision activity not only emphasizes the control aspect, but also on coaching and providing feedback. The principal plays an active role in providing direction and solutions to the problems faced by teachers during the program implementation process.

Table 9. Interview Summary on Supervision and Follow-up of Evaluation Results

Nu	Report	School Origin	Key Quotes	Empirical Meaning
1	KS1 (SY)	SMPN 1 Simeulue Timur	"I often go directly to the classroom to see the implementation of learning and give input."	The principal supervises the learning activities directly.
2	KS2 (SF)	SMPN 7 Simeulue Timur	"We discuss every result of supervision with the teacher so that it can be corrected immediately."	Supervision is carried out in a participatory and coaching-based manner.
3	KS3 (DA)	SMPN 1 Teupah Barat	"We use the results of the evaluation to develop the next program."	The results of the supervision are used as the basis for further planning.

The results of the study show that school principals carry out supervision not in the form of top-down control, but rather as a coaching and mentoring process. This approach creates an open work atmosphere, where teachers can receive feedback well without feeling rigidly supervised. This supervision carried out with a humanist and reflective

approach shows the application of the dimension of Individualized Consideration in transformational leadership.

In addition, the results of the evaluation are used directly as a basis for improving the school program in the next period. The principal followed up on the evaluation findings by revising the RKS, developing new strategies, and adjusting performance indicators. This cycle shows the practice of continuous improvement at the school level, which is a characteristic of learning organizations. The principal also builds an internal feedback system through periodic evaluation meetings, so that each program has a continuous control and improvement mechanism.

In general, the results of the study show three main trends in the competence of school principals in the aspects of evaluation and supervision. First, the evaluation is carried out in a planned manner and involves all schools, so that the results are comprehensive and objective. Second, supervision is carried out with a coaching and reflective approach, not just administrative control. Third, the results of the evaluation are used directly as the basis for planning and innovation of the next program, showing that there is a continuity between evaluation and school development.

Thus, it can be concluded that school principals in Simeulue Regency have shown good ability in carrying out the function of evaluating and supervising school programs. Evaluation is not only a tool to measure success, but also a means of collective learning for all school residents. The integration of managerial competencies in evaluation and transformational leadership values results in a pattern of supervision that is reflective, collaborative, and oriented towards continuous quality improvement. The principal plays the role of a mentor as well as a driver in realizing an evaluative culture that encourages schools to be more effective and adaptive to change.

D. Synthesis of Research Results

Based on the results of the research that has been described, a comprehensive picture of the competence of school principals in managing changes towards effective schools through three main managerial functions: planning, implementation, and evaluation and supervision of school programs. These three aspects are interrelated and form an integrated education management cycle, where the principal plays the role not only of administrators, but also of transformational leaders who are able to inspire and mobilize all school citizens.

In the planning aspect, the principal shows the ability to prepare a strategic plan that is participatory, adaptive, and oriented to the school's vision. The process of preparing the School Work Plan (RKS) and School Activity Plan and Budget (RKAS) is carried out through annual work meetings involving teachers, education staff, and school committees. This planning pattern reflects the ability of the principal to apply the principle of collaborative planning, where the participation of all school residents is the basis for decision-making. In addition, the flexibility in adapting the plan to policy dynamics and field conditions shows that the principal has a reflective awareness of change. This illustrates the application of the dimensions of Inspirational Motivation and Intellectual Stimulation in transformational leadership.

In the aspect of implementing school programs, school principals play an active role in organizing human and material resources efficiently. The division of tasks is carried out by taking into account individual competencies, experiences, and interests, so that each teacher feels valued and has clear responsibilities. In addition, the principal

encourages a culture of cooperation and open communication, which strengthens solidarity and a sense of togetherness in the school environment. The principal's efforts in providing motivation, reward, and moral support to teachers show the application of the values of Individualized Consideration and Idealized Influence. School principals not only demand performance, but also foster enthusiasm and commitment through example and empowerment.

Meanwhile, in the aspect of evaluation and supervision, the principal has carried out the function of control and reflection in a planned and systematic manner. Evaluations are carried out periodically through coordination meetings with the teacher council and supervisors, and are complemented by direct observation of the implementation of learning and school programs. The monitoring process is not only focused on performance assessment, but also directed at coaching and providing constructive feedback. The results of the evaluation are then used as the basis for preparing programs and improving plans in the next period. This cycle shows that the principal has built a continuous feedback loop, in line with the principle of continuous improvement in education quality management.

Overall, the results of the study confirm that school principals in Simeulue Regency have been able to integrate managerial competence and transformational leadership in managing changes towards effective schools. The integration can be explained through three main findings:

1. The managerial aspect is that the principal carries out the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling consistently with participatory and accountable principles.
2. The transformational leadership aspect is that the principal shows an inspiring, visionary, reflective, and caring character for individuals, which fosters motivation and commitment to work among teachers.
3. The aspect of organizational results is that the combination of the two approaches results in a school culture that is collaborative, adaptive, and oriented towards improving the quality of learning.

This integration forms a more comprehensive leadership model, where the managerial technical aspects serve as the operational framework, while the transformational dimension becomes the emotional and moral forces that drive change. The principal plays the role of a central figure who not only ensures the implementation of the program, but also fosters meaning, enthusiasm, and commitment in each individual involved. Thus, the leadership of school principals in Simeulue Regency reflects a paradigm shift from administrative managers to transformational learning leaders, namely leaders who are able to manage systems while inspiring changes in behavior and work culture in schools.

Empirically, the findings of this study show that the effectiveness of schools is not only determined by the quality of program planning and implementation, but also by the ability of school principals to create synergies between managerial functions and transformational leadership values. Principals who have the ability to plan strategically, implement collaboratively, and evaluate reflectively will be able to bring schools to become learning organizations that are adaptive to changes in the educational environment. Therefore, the competence of school principals in managing change can be seen as an important foundation for the realization of effective schools that are oriented towards improving quality and sustainability.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the leadership of school principals in Simeulue Regency has effectively integrated two important dimensions in education management, namely managerial competence and transformational leadership. These two aspects have proven to be complementary in creating school changes towards continuous effectiveness and quality improvement. The principal not only plays the role of an administrative manager who ensures the implementation of the program, but also as a leader who is able to inspire, empower, and foster collective commitment among teachers and school staff.

In the planning aspect, the principal shows the ability to design work programs that are participatory, adaptive, and oriented to the long-term vision of the school. The process of preparing the School Work Plan (RKS) and School Activity Plan and Budget (RKAS) is carried out through annual meetings involving teachers, education staff, and school committees. The participation of all these elements shows the existence of collaborative leadership practices that foster a sense of belonging to the school program. The pattern is in line with the dimension of Inspirational Motivation in transformational leadership theory put forward by (Khan et al., 2022) where a leader moves his subordinates through the collective spirit and meaning of a shared vision.

In addition, the flexibility of the principal in adapting the plan to field conditions shows the application of Intellectual Stimulation, which encourages reflection and innovation amid limited accessibility and frequent changes in policy. In the Simeulue context, such flexibility is essential to address geographical constraints where distance and resource distribution require adaptive scheduling, remote coordination, and improvisational leadership responses. This supports the view of (Fullan, 2002) and (Kotter & Cohen, 2012) that successful educational change depends on leaders' capacity to manage adaptation processes without losing strategic direction. Thus, the managerial planning function in this context transcends administrative boundaries to become an adaptive and collaborative problem-solving process that sustains learning continuity in challenging environments.

At the program implementation stage, the principal displayed a strong ability to organize human and material resources effectively. The division of teachers' duties is based on individual competencies, experiences, and interests, which reflects the application of the principle of the right man on the right place in education management. This approach allows teachers to work within their capacity, thereby increasing comfort and responsibility for the results of their work. In addition, the principal also strives to build a harmonious working atmosphere through two-way communication and a clear division of roles. The success of school principals in developing teamwork shows the implementation of the Idealized Influence dimension, where leaders become role models and sources of trust for their subordinates (Afshari, 2022).

Furthermore, the principal shows concern for the professional growth of teachers by providing motivation, recognition, and continuous mentoring. This human-centered leadership reflects Individualized Consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994), emphasizing empathy and empowerment. Teachers who feel supported exhibit higher intrinsic motivation, reinforcing (Yukl & Becker, 2006)'s notion that effective leadership develops people, not just systems. Thus, the Simeulue principals exemplify leadership that transforms structural constraints into human capital development.

In evaluation and supervision, principals apply reflective and participatory control mechanisms that convert evaluation from administrative reporting into collective learning. Evaluation results feed directly into the next planning cycle, forming a continuous improvement loop aligned with Fullan, (2002) learning organization theory. This approach is especially significant in isolated regions, where reflection and internal capacity-building replace dependence on external training and monitoring. The supervision pattern mentoring-based rather than authoritarian—illustrates how transformational leadership can strengthen professional learning even in limited-resource contexts (Toh et al., 2022).

When viewed holistically, the three managerial functions planning, implementation, and evaluation form a coherent change cycle adapted to local realities. The principal integrates classical management with transformational values: planning with vision and participation, implementation through empowerment and example, and evaluation through reflection and collaboration. This integration shows that school effectiveness in Simeulue is not solely a product of system management, but of leaders' capacity to cultivate motivation, inspiration, and shared responsibility under contextual constraints (Cheng, 2022).

These findings reaffirm the view (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) that effective school leadership must transform organizational culture, not just improve performance. Principals who harmonize managerial and transformational competencies foster adaptive, innovative, and sustainable schools (Sugiarto, 2025). In this study, Simeulue principals illustrate a paradigm shift from managerial leaders to transformational learning leaders—leaders who build commitment, awareness, and meaning in geographically isolated educational systems.

The implications of these findings suggest that the success of schools in managing change depends on principals' ability to integrate rational managerial control and emotional transformational drive. Managerially competent principals manage resources effectively, while transformational leaders mobilize and inspire individuals. Together, they produce adaptive, participatory, and quality-driven schools. This integrated model therefore serves as a context-sensitive leadership framework suitable for archipelagic or resource-limited regions—where adaptability, reflection, and human-centered empowerment form the foundation for sustainable educational improvement.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study shows that the success of principals in managing changes towards effective schools is determined by the ability to integrate managerial competencies with transformational leadership. School principals in Simeulue Regency have been able to plan participatively, implement collaboratively, and evaluate reflectively, so as to create leadership that is adaptive, inspiring, and oriented towards improving the quality of schools. **Implication:** The results of this study confirm the importance of developing principals who focus not only on administrative efficiency, but also on the ability to motivate, empower, and foster an innovative culture. These findings can serve as a basis for educational institutions and local governments in designing leadership training that balances managerial and transformational aspects so that schools are able to cope with change in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, the integrated leadership model presented in this study provides a long-term and context-sensitive framework for sustainable change management. It allows schools especially in

geographically isolated regions like Simeulue to continuously adapt to policy shifts, technological transitions, and environmental challenges through participatory planning, reflective supervision, and empowerment-based implementation. This embedded cycle of continuous improvement transforms short-term initiatives into enduring organizational learning, ensuring resilience and sustainability. **Limitation:** This study is limited to three schools in Simeulue Regency with a qualitative approach, so the results cannot be generalized widely. The focus of the research is also still focused on the perspective of the principal without further exploring the views of teachers and other stakeholders. **Future Research:** Follow-up research is suggested to expand the context by involving more schools and using a quantitative or mixed methods approach to examine the relationship between transformational leadership, managerial competence, and school effectiveness. Future studies could also test the sustainability dimension of this integrated model evaluating how the adaptive cycle of reflection, collaboration, and capacity building contributes to long-term institutional resilience and educational innovation.

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