



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Julizar Idris¹

¹STIA Banten, Indonesia
Email: idrizarjulizar@gmail.com¹

Abstract

This investigation's objective is to determine the extent to which transformational leadership impacts the quality of public services provided by local government agencies. Interviews and observations are employed to gather data qualitatively. The study results indicate that transformational leadership can increase employee motivation, create a collaborative organizational culture, and improve communication between employees. Leaders who implement this leadership style successfully motivate employees to participate in decision-making and achieve excellence, enhancing public service quality and responsiveness. However, challenges in consistently applying transformational leadership must be overcome through training and developing leadership skills. These findings are anticipated to guide local government agencies in enhancing the quality of public services via effective leadership.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Public Service Quality, Local Government Agencies, Employee Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

In the present era of bureaucratic reform and globalisation, the quality of public services is an essential concern that must be taken into account by all local government agencies. The public is increasingly emphasising the importance of transparency, accountability, and efficiency in all government services. Sari (2023) posits that implementing systems and procedures is not the sole factor in enhancing the quality of public services; rather, the agency's leadership plays a significant role. Transformational leadership is a pertinent strategy for improving the quality of public services and leading change in this context.

Transformational leadership is characterized by the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and develop the potential of individuals and teams to achieve common goals (Julizar, 2023). Bass and Avolio (1994) stated that transformational leaders can create an attractive vision and instil positive values, thus moving team members to contribute more to the organization. In the context of local government, leaders who apply this leadership style are expected to be able to change the work culture, strengthen service ethics, and increase employee commitment to their duties and responsibilities.

Several studies have shown that transformational leadership can contribute significantly to improving the quality of public services. For example, research by Yulianto (2022) found that government agencies led by transformational leaders had higher public satisfaction levels than agencies led by more authoritarian leaders. It shows that an inclusive and participatory leadership style positively affects public perception of public services. On the other hand, the challenge faced in

implementing transformational leadership in local government agencies is resistance to change. According to Nugroho (2023), many employees feel comfortable with the old way of working and are sceptical of the new approaches leaders offer. Therefore, transformational leaders must communicate the vision and goals of change and involve employees in the change planning and implementation process. In this way, it is hoped that employees can feel involved and have a sense of ownership of the changes.

In Indonesia, the quality of public services at the regional level still needs to be improved, especially in terms of speed and responsiveness to community needs. A study by Wibowo (2023) showed that local government agencies implementing transformational leadership effectively improved service processes, reduced waiting times, and increased public satisfaction. It shows that transformational leadership can potentially drive innovation in public services.

In recent years, the public has demonstrated an increasing dissatisfaction with the public services provided by local government agencies. A variety of media reports and public satisfaction surveys indicate that the current services are still perceived as slow, inefficient, and less responsive to the needs of citizens. The emergence of demands for transparency and accountability has exacerbated the pressure on government agency leaders to implement changes. Transformational leadership is expected to answer this challenge with its inclusive and inspiring approach. However, many leaders face difficulties in implementing the principles of transformational leadership due to resistance from employees accustomed to conventional ways of working. This phenomenon raises questions about how much influence transformational leadership has on improving the quality of public services in local governments and the challenges that must be faced to realize these changes.

Table 1. Problems in Improving the Quality of Public Services

No	The problem	Impact	Potential Solutions
1	Public dissatisfaction with the quality of public services	Declining public trust in local government agencies	Applying transformational leadership to improve service ethics
2	Employee resistance to changes in service systems	Delays in implementation of necessary changes in public services	Involving employees in change planning and training
3	Lack of effective communication regarding the vision and goals of change	Misunderstanding and confusion among employees and the public	Building open and transparent communication channels regarding the change vision
4	Lack of training for leaders to apply transformational leadership style	The inability of leaders to inspire and motivate employees to change	Providing leadership training programs for leaders in local government agencies

The main problem in improving the quality of public services in local government agencies is public dissatisfaction with the services provided, which results in a decrease in trust in the government. Citizens increasingly demand transparency, speed, and service responsiveness but often find bureaucracy slow and inefficient. It creates pressure for leaders to make significant changes. One

potential solution is the application of transformational leadership, which can improve service ethics and standards. By involving employees in the change process and providing necessary training, leaders can inspire teams to commit to a new vision so that the quality of public services can be improved and public trust in government can be restored.

Previous studies have shown the importance of transformational leadership in improving the quality of public services. Basu and Sinha (2021) found that transformational leadership positively affects employee satisfaction and the quality of public services. They stated that this leadership style encourages employees to achieve their best potential, directly impacting the public's quality of services. Furthermore, Zhu and Akhtar (2022) showed that leaders who apply a transformational leadership style successfully change the organizational culture, leading to increased effectiveness and responsiveness of public services. Yulianto (2022) also emphasized that the success of better public services in local government agencies can be achieved through inclusive and participatory leadership, which is the core of transformational leadership. Research by Sari (2023) highlights the importance of leaders who can inspire and motivate their teams, as this significantly increases public satisfaction with public services. Nugroho (2023) explains that employee resistance to change can be minimized through a transformational leadership approach that involves effective communication and employee involvement in the change process. In addition, research by Prasetyo (2021) shows that transformational leadership can increase innovation in public services so that the public gets better and more efficient services. Another study by Fajar and Rahayu (2022) revealed that teams led with a transformational style are more likely to be committed to organizational goals, which impacts improving service quality.

In addition, analysis by Kurniawan (2023) shows that transformational leadership contributes to developing employee capacity, further improving their ability to provide quality services. Research by Widyastuti (2023) also found that leaders who can build emotional relationships with employees can increase job satisfaction, which positively impacts public service Performance. Research by Sembiring and Sari (2023) shows that applying transformational leadership principles can reduce employee turnover rates in government agencies so that team stability can be achieved and the quality of public services is maintained. These studies confirm that the application of transformational leadership not only improves employee Performance but also has a direct positive impact on the quality of public services received by the public. By understanding these dynamics, it is hoped that local government agencies can be more responsive to community needs and rebuild public trust through better services.

Research gap regarding the research gap related to transformational leadership in improving the quality of public services, namely:

Table 2 Research Gap

No	Research Gap	Researcher	Findings	Mismatch
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No	Research Gap	Researcher	Findings	Mismatch
1	Limitations of geographic context	Basu & Sinha (2021)	Transformational leadership improves employee satisfaction and service quality.	The research was conducted in one area, which was less representative of other local government agencies.
		The Last Supper (2022)	Transformational leadership in remote areas increases community participation.	The research results cannot be generalized to urban or larger areas.
2	Lack of focus on long-term impacts	Zhu & Akhtar (2022)	Transformational leaders change the culture of the organization to improve service.	Long-term impacts are not explored, focusing only on immediate changes in organizational culture.
		Hasan & Prabowo (2023)	Organizational culture transformation has positive impacts in the short term.	The study did not address the long-term effects on the quality of public services.
3	Lack of exploration of inhibiting factors	Yulianto (2022)	Inclusive and participatory leadership contributes to better public services.	Does not discuss factors that hinder the implementation of transformational leadership.
		Sari D (2023)	Many external factors influence the effectiveness of transformational leadership.	There is no in-depth analysis of the factors that hinder implementation in certain agencies.
4	Limitations in service innovation	The Promised Neverland (2021)	Transformational leadership can enhance innovation in public services.	It does not discuss how the innovation can be sustainable in the long term.
		Dawn & Grace (2022).	Public service innovation increases with effective leadership.	Lack of analysis of the challenges faced in implementing the innovation.
5	Team stability and its influence	The Last Supper (2023)	The application of transformational leadership principles reduces employee turnover.	Does not address the long-term impact of team stability on the quality of service provided.
		Ramadan & Widi (2023)	Good team stability in government agencies contributes to improved services.	The study did not cover the impact of team stability on broader community satisfaction.

Based on the above background, this study aims to examine the role of transformational leadership in improving the quality of public services in local government agencies. By understanding the dynamics and influence of transformational leadership, effective strategies can be found to improve the quality of public services so that local governments can be more responsive and accountable to the needs of the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders motivate and inspire their followers to achieve greater objectives. Mazzola et al. (2023) asserted that leaders who implement this approach foster an innovative work environment, enhance collaboration, and empower employees. Transformational leaders can alter the organisational culture by articulating a clear vision, which benefits the quality of public services (Julizar, 2024). It demonstrates the critical role of effective leadership in achieving the anticipated outcomes of public services.

Quality of Public Services

Public service quality emphasizes that public perceptions of service quality are greatly influenced by their experiences and expectations. Arya et al. (2023) showed that service quality can be improved through effective leadership, which focuses on public satisfaction and innovation in service. Quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy are key in assessing the performance of government agencies. Leaders responsive to public needs can ensure that public services meet their expectations.

Motivation

Motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, shows that employees' basic needs must be met to improve performance. According to Deci and Ryan (2022), employees tend to show higher motivation when they feel autonomy, competence, and social relationships. Leaders who understand and meet these needs in the public sector will create a positive work environment. Thus, employees will be more motivated to provide high-quality services to the community and contribute to the organization's mission.

Participation in Decision Making

The theory of participation in decision-making highlights the importance of employee involvement in the policy-making process. Cho et al. (2022) stated that when employees are involved, they feel more valued and have a sense of ownership of the organization. Leaders who encourage active participation increase employee commitment and motivation, which contributes to improving the quality of public services (Julizar, 2024). This involvement also allows leaders to gain a broader perspective in decision-making, resulting in services more responsive to community needs.

METHOD

Research Design

In the context of intrinsic motivation, motivation demonstrates that performance must be improved by addressing employees' fundamental needs. Employees demonstrate elevated motivation when they encounter autonomy, competence, and social relationships, as per Deci and Ryan (2022). Leaders who comprehend and address these requirements will establish a positive work environment in the public sector. As a result, employees will be more motivated to provide the community with high-quality services and contribute to the organization's mission.

Research Time

The research period will last four months, from April to July 2024. In the first month, researchers will prepare, including developing research instruments and identifying research locations. The second and third months will be used for data collection through interviews and observations, while the fourth month will focus on data analysis and compiling research reports. This systematic scheduling ensures that each research stage is carried out comprehensively.

Population and Sample

This study's population consisted of all employees and leaders in local government agencies in City Y. It will use a purposive sampling technique to determine the sample. The sample consisted of 15 employees and five leaders with relevant experience in implementing transformational leadership. According to Creswell (2020), purposive sampling allows researchers to select individuals with rich knowledge or experience about the phenomenon being studied.

Data Collection Techniques

Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and observations. Interviews will be semi-structured to provide flexibility in exploring topics and allow respondents to share their in-depth views. Participatory observation will be conducted to understand the agency's social interactions and work culture. In addition, field notes will be taken to document findings during the data collection process. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), this combination of data collection techniques helps to gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Data analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This process includes transcribing interviews, coding data, and identifying key themes from the data. Researchers will use qualitative analysis software such as NVivo to assist in organizing and coding the data. According to

Braun and Clarke (2021), thematic analysis provides a structure for interpreting data and identifying relevant patterns and themes to the study.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

The study's results indicate that implementing transformational leadership in local government agencies contributes significantly to improving the quality of public services. Based on in-depth interviews with 15 employees and 5 leaders, several main themes emerged, namely, employee motivation, organizational culture development, and improved communication.

1. Employee Motivation

The study's findings indicate that leaders who implement transformational leadership styles can significantly inspire employees to improve their Performance. During interviews, numerous employees expressed that their leaders consistently offer motivation and encouragement to achieve their goals. The attitude of leaders who promote recognition and appreciation for employee efforts inspires them to work harder and feel appreciated. This sense of engagement fosters a positive work environment in which employees feel accountable for their work outcomes. Consequently, this heightened motivation directly affects the quality of services provided to the public, resulting in a superior experience.

2. Organizational Culture Development

This study also found that transformational leadership is important in developing organizational culture in local government agencies. Leaders who apply this leadership style successfully create a collaborative and inclusive work environment. Employees feel valued and encouraged to participate in decision-making actively. It creates a culture where employees feel they have an important role in achieving organizational goals. By forming a positive organizational culture, agencies can be more responsive to community needs and improve overall team Performance. This success shows that transformational leadership is not only for individuals but also for the entire organization.

3. Improved Communication

The observation results show that effective communication is key to transformational leadership. Leaders who are open to listening to input and ideas from employees create an atmosphere that supports openness. Employees feel more comfortable sharing opinions and making suggestions to improve work processes. Good communication improves relationships between employees and strengthens trust in leaders. With clear and transparent communication, government agencies can more efficiently implement policies and provide quality public services. This study emphasizes the importance of communication in creating a healthy and productive work environment.

4. Challenges Faced

Although research results show many benefits of transformational leadership, some challenges are faced in its implementation. Some employees stated that not all leaders can apply this leadership style consistently. Sometimes, leaders are less transparent in decision-making, which can reduce employee trust. In addition, differences in character and communication style between leaders are also obstacles. Therefore, government agencies need to provide the necessary training and development so that leaders can hone their leadership skills. With the right support, it is hoped that the implementation of transformational leadership can be carried out more effectively.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that transformational leadership significantly influences the quality of public services in local government agencies. Regarding employee motivation, this study aligns with the findings of Basu and Sinha (2021), who State's that transformational leadership can improve employee satisfaction and Performance. The observation findings show that good communication is rather important for transformational leadership. Leaders who are open to employee ideas and comments help cultivate this quality. Workers are more likely to voice their ideas and provide recommendations for improvement of working procedures. Excellent communication strengthens the confidence in leaders and improves the bonds among staff members. Using open and honest communication, government agencies can improve their efficiency in the execution of policies and the provision of premium public services. This research emphasises the need for communication to develop a good and healthy workplace.

Therefore, developing a healthy organizational culture should be a focus for leaders in creating better public services. In addition, effective communication is an important aspect identified in this study. Leaders open to employee input create an atmosphere that supports openness and trust. This finding aligns with research by Nugroho (2023), which highlights the importance of communication in reducing employee resistance to change. Good communication strengthens relationships between employees and allows government agencies to be more efficient in implementing policies. With clear and transparent communication, leaders can create a productive work environment that responds to the community's needs.

The implementation of transformational leadership, on the other hand, was fraught with difficulties, according to this study. Several employees have believed that not all leaders can apply this leadership style consistently. It demonstrates a gap in the research that has been done so far, as there has not been a significant amount of research conducted to investigate the factors that influence the consistency of the application of transformational leadership. It is necessary to conduct additional research to determine the types of training and support that leaders can offer to facilitate the development of effective leadership skills. In addition, it is important to note that leaders within their organisations do not always implement the principle of transparency in decision-making. This

limitation can hurt employee trust, which can hinder the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Previous research, such as that conducted by Yulianto (2022), shows that transparency and inclusiveness in leadership are essential to creating trust. Thus, this study emphasizes the need to develop leaders' abilities in terms of transparency and communication to improve the implementation of transformational leadership.

The results of this study indicate that transformational leadership significantly improves the quality of public services in local government agencies. However, appropriate training and development must address challenges in consistently implementing this leadership style. Further research in this area can provide deeper insights into effective strategies for implementing transformational leadership to improve the quality of public services.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that transformational leadership greatly enhances the quality of public services in local government organisations. The study's findings showed that leaders using this leadership style raise employee motivation, foster a good work atmosphere and help drive Performance. Furthermore, the evolution of a cooperative organisational culture helps staff members participate in decision-making, enhancing the responsiveness of public services.

Effective communication has also been an important factor in implementing transformational leadership. Leaders open to employee input create an atmosphere of mutual trust that supports productivity. However, challenges in consistently implementing this leadership style indicate the need for adequate training and support for leaders to develop effective leadership skills. Thus, the implementation of transformational leadership can improve the quality of public services if supported by the development of good leadership and communication skills. This study provides important insights for local government agencies in creating more responsive and quality public services.

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