



# The Leadership of School Principals as Change Agents in Coaching and Development to Influence Teachers' Creative Behavior

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## KEYWORDS

*Principle,  
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## A B S T R A C T

The principal's role as a leader and agent of change is pivotal in influencing teacher performance and advancing educational quality. Beyond administrative responsibilities, principals adopt transformational leadership to inspire innovation, promote creativity, and build a positive school culture. By fostering collaboration, openness, and adaptability, they create environments that drive continuous improvement. Teachers, as the foundation of effective learning, benefit from the principal's support through motivation, training, and the cultivation of a collaborative work culture. This empowerment enables teachers to develop innovative teaching methods, effectively integrate technology, and enhance student outcomes. Additionally, principals play a crucial role in shaping school norms and values to align with educational goals, cultivating trust and shared leadership while reducing resistance to change. Through valuing creativity and encouraging teacher initiatives, principals strengthen readiness for innovation and ensure schools remain dynamic and forward-looking. This article explores the principal's role as a transformational leader and agent of change, highlighting their strategies and impact in fostering teacher performance and creating adaptive, innovative, and collaborative educational environments. remain vibrant, innovative, and aligned with the evolving demands of education and society.

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## 1. Introduction

Education is one of the key elements in the development of a nation, and the quality of education heavily depends on leadership within each educational institution. The school principal, as the leader at the primary and secondary education levels, plays a crucial role in improving educational quality. As a leader, the school principal functions not only as the school manager but also as a mentor who motivates and inspires teachers and students to achieve the desired educational goals. This article will delve into the understanding of leadership, the role of school principals, and the critical importance of their leadership, as well as various factors that influence their leadership effectiveness (Julaiha, 2019).

The school principal holds the highest position in the school because of the significant role they play in all aspects of the school environment. Their duties involve ensuring the successful implementation of educational processes through the management of school administration and all its components. The school principal is also responsible for the quality of the resources available, ensuring that they are capable of performing their tasks according to their roles and responsibilities. To achieve this, collaboration between the school principal and teachers is essential, requiring effective coordination to advance the school's quality. Therefore, the leadership of the school principal is a determining factor in the educational process within the school (Daud, 2023).

The role of the school principal as a change agent is crucial in the development of educational management because of their capacity to encourage innovation, shared leadership, and a positive school culture. The principal acts as an innovator by supporting teacher leadership, which is key to transforming schools and enhancing student achievement. Their role extends beyond traditional administrative tasks to include transformational leadership, which significantly impacts organizational change by increasing commitment, openness, and readiness for change while reducing resistance. This transformational approach encourages principals to view change as an opportunity, thus fostering a collaborative environment within the school and the broader community. School principals play a defining role in developing the school culture, which is central to educational success, involving the creation of cultural norms aligned with the educational needs of society. The principal's awareness of personal quality, delegation of responsibility, and strengthening of the school's culture and values are crucial for effectively implementing change (Rizkiani, 2020).

Schools face several challenges in implementing change, particularly with the introduction of new curricula. One major issue is the understanding and readiness of teachers, which affects the effective implementation of the curriculum. Teachers need adequate training and support to adapt to the new curriculum, which emphasizes different learning approaches and value-based education. Broader educational challenges include gaps in educational outcomes, substandard facilities, and a shortage of quality teachers, all of which collectively hinder the achievement of educational goals. Elementary schools grapple with issues such as emotional instability and individual learning differences among students, which require tailored educational approaches and equitable distribution of resources (Bawon et al., 2023).

The school principal plays a central role in building a school culture that is innovative and adaptive to change. In the context of modern education, school principals are not only administrative managers but also transformational leaders who can inspire and motivate all school members to innovate. One of the key aspects of school leadership is coaching and developing teachers' creative behaviors (Utari & Hadi, 2020).

Teachers are at the forefront of the learning process. To create meaningful learning that is relevant to the evolving times, teachers are expected to continuously develop their creativity. This creativity is necessary to design innovative teaching methods, use technology effectively, and create a learning environment that supports the development of students' potential. In this context, the school principal plays the role of a change agent by creating a conducive environment to foster teachers' creative behaviors through various strategies such as providing motivation, training, and establishing a collaborative work culture (Gani et al., 2024).

Effective leadership approaches, such as transformational leadership, can enhance teacher engagement in learning innovations. A school principal who supports teachers' creative initiatives, provides the freedom to experiment, and values their efforts can encourage positive changes in educational practices. This, in turn, will impact the improvement of learning quality and student achievement (Arum et al., 2021).

## 2. Methodology

The research method used in this article is a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis. Data was collected through a literature review, which includes journals and scholarly articles discussing the topic of school principal leadership. This study aims to provide a better understanding of the role and quality of school principals' leadership in the context of education.



### 3. Result and Discussion

#### School Principal Leadership

The term "school principal leader," when broken down into its components, consists of the words "leader" and "school principal." Similarly, the term "school principal" comprises two words: "principal" and "school." Each of these terms—"leader," "principal," and "school"—has distinct meanings.

The following presents the definition of a leader according to several experts. According to Robbert D. Stuart and Morgan (2002), a leader is someone who is expected to have the ability to influence, provide guidance, and determine the direction of individuals to achieve organizational goals. Spillane (2006) asserts that a leader is a change agent who influences people more than they are influenced by others. Pramudyo (2013) defines a leader as someone who inspires with a clear vision of how things can be done better (Utari & Hadi, 2020). The school principal is the driving force for human resources in the school, particularly teachers and staff (Julaiha, 2019).

The term "school principal" is derived from two words: "principal" and "school." The word "principal" can be interpreted as the head or leader of an organization or institution. On the other hand, "school" refers to an institution where teaching and learning occur. Thus, the term school principal refers to the leader of a school or an institution where teaching and learning take place. According to the Indonesian Dictionary, a school principal is defined as "the person (teacher) who leads a school or the head teacher" (Daud, 2023).

The school principal is the leader who drives all activities within the school environment. The school principal is the key figure in improving the quality of education in the school, with the support of the entire school community. Making changes, showing commitment, implementing strategies, and motivating are essential traits that a school principal must have to enhance the quality of education. The leadership of the school principal provides a reflection of the school's overall environment (Sari et al., 2021).

From the various definitions above, the author concludes that a leader is someone who has the ability to influence, direct, guide, and motivate others while offering inspiration with a clear vision to achieve the desired collective goals. A leader is tasked with providing direction, making decisions, and motivating team members to work effectively and efficiently. Leadership is not only about power but also about the ability to influence and empower others. Meanwhile, a school principal can be defined as a professional responsible for managing and leading a school. The role of the school principal goes beyond administration and includes curriculum development, educational quality enhancement, and resource management, including human resources, finances, and facilities.

Thus, it can be concluded that a school principal leader is someone who not only manages the school well but also directs and motivates all components of the school to achieve educational goals. As a leader, the school principal must have the skills to manage teams, formulate appropriate policies, and create a conducive educational climate for the development of both students and staff.

The school principal, as a leader with full responsibility for advancing the educational institution they lead, has a very significant function and role. According to Rizkiani & Salahuddin (2020), the functions and roles of a school principal leader include:

a. School Principal as an Educator in Teacher Development

The school principal has the function of shaping teachers' character based on educational values. Indicators include: involving teachers in scientific activities, guiding teachers in lesson planning, and using learning time effectively at school to improve educational quality.

b. School Principal as a Manager in Teacher Development

The school principal functions in managing school administration and available resources to achieve institutional goals effectively and efficiently. Indicators include: empowering teachers through cooperation to enhance professional capacity in the school environment, providing opportunities for teachers to improve their profession, and encouraging the involvement of all teachers in various activities.

c. School Principal as a Supervisor in Teacher Development

The school principal functions to assist in the development of teachers' professionalism. Indicators include: conducting classroom visits to offer new teaching methods.

d. School Principal as a Mentor and Motivator

The school principal must be able to provide encouragement and support for the professional development of teachers and staff, ensuring that all educational components grow professionally. Teachers, as educators, must create a conducive environment for the teaching and learning process. Indicators include: the ability to manage the learning environment and the ability to make decisions to improve educational quality.

According to Elsbree (in J. Bawon, 2023: 199), there are four leadership qualities that school principals must possess:

- a. **Personality**  
A school principal must have a strong personality, particularly in integrity, discipline, work ethic, and communication skills, including the ability to build good relationships with students, staff, and parents.
- b. **Purpose**  
A school principal needs to have a clear purpose focused on improving the quality of education in the school. This purpose should align with the needs and desires of the staff and students and be directed towards achieving optimal results.
- c. **Knowledge**  
A school principal must have adequate knowledge of education and educational management, including knowledge of curriculum, teaching techniques, assessment, staff development, and financial management.
- d. **Professional Skills**  
A school principal must possess the professional skills necessary to perform their duties effectively. These skills include organizing, leading, decision-making, problem-solving, and working with teams.

Other opinions state that there are five competency standards that a school principal must possess: personality competence, managerial competence, entrepreneurial competence, supervisory competence, and social competence. To be appointed as a school principal, one must meet the standards set in the Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 13 of 2007, which includes qualification and competency standards (Julaiha, 2019).

Some leadership models that can be applied by school principals include: authoritarian leadership, where the school principal makes decisions independently and controls all school activities; democratic leadership, where the school principal involves teachers and staff in decision-making and listens to their input; and transformational leadership, where the school principal focuses on changes that encourage creativity and innovation in the school (Rafiq-uz-Zaman et al., 2025). These leadership styles can be adjusted according to the school's situation and needs.

There are several supporting factors and obstacles faced by school principals in carrying out their leadership activities. Supporting factors include: support from staff and parents, availability of adequate resources, and visionary leadership capable of inspiring others. Obstacles include: inadequate resources, both financial and facilities, lack of leadership training for school principals, and limited cooperation between the school and the community and parents/students (Basri & Tambunan, 2023).

### **Change Agent**

The concept of a change agent refers to individuals who actively facilitate and implement changes within an organization to enhance its effectiveness and adapt to new challenges. The school principal, as a change agent, plays a vital role in this process by fostering an environment conducive to innovation and progress. They are responsible for motivating, leading, and directing human resources to improve the quality of education and prepare the school for future challenges (Fadilla & Chaniago, 2024).

A change agent is someone capable of overcoming reliance on old patterns and reducing institutional barriers, thereby driving progress within their area or organization (Morisson, 2022). A school principal is considered an effective change agent when they are involved in innovation, maintain their role long enough to see initiatives through, and achieve positive outcomes, particularly in student performance (Hussain et al., 2016).

The role of a change agent goes beyond leadership to include fostering learning, skill development, and problem-solving in others, often through relationships like manager-employee or teacher-student. Effective change agent leadership includes the ability to recognize future trends, guide the change agenda, and focus on high-impact initiatives while maintaining authenticity and courage. This is particularly important in fast-developing sectors such as higher education (Baer et al., 2015).

### **Organizational Change**

Organizational change refers to the process of transitioning from the current state to a desired future state to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of an institution. This change may involve alterations in policies, products, or ideas, and is often driven by the need to adapt to both external and internal challenges (Khinaya & Aslami, 2023). In the education sector, change is necessary to improve educational quality, impacting not only staff and students but also the broader community (Diaconu et al., 2023).



The organizational change process is complex and diverse, involving stages such as preparation, implementation, and follow-up. Resistance to change is a common challenge, stemming from individual factors like personality and perceptions, as well as organizational factors like structural inertia and resource allocation threats.

Effective change management is essential, requiring strategies to overcome resistance and ensure successful implementation. This involves engaging all members of the educational organization to understand the needs and implications of change, thereby facilitating a smooth transition and achieving desired educational outcomes (Diaconu et al., 2023).

### **Characteristics of a Change Agent Leader**

The characteristics of a change agent leader include being involved in decision-making, being creative, accountable, and showing gratitude and concern for others. Successful change leaders also possess strategic intelligence, interpersonal skills, and a deep understanding of organizational dynamics, which are crucial for managing and sustaining organizational change (Qoirunnisa et al., 2024). They prioritize relationships, processes, and goals, focusing on strengthening social capital, amplifying marginalized voices, and aligning stakeholders with the mission of change (Lee, 2022).

### **Creative Teacher Behavior**

A creative teacher is someone who is full of energy and enthusiasm to inspire students to achieve better performance and develop their creativity, particularly in the use of new teaching methods (Mas'un et al., 2023). Teacher creativity in teaching refers to a teacher's ability to plan, organize, implement, and evaluate the learning process in a creative manner (Buloggong, 2024). According to Arum et al. (2021), creative teacher behavior refers to the consistent actions or attitudes displayed by teachers to achieve learning goals by producing something new or even changing practices based on their creative abilities during the teaching and learning process.

From the discussion, creative teacher behavior is a set of actions, attitudes, and ways of thinking demonstrated by teachers in designing, implementing, and evaluating an innovative, engaging, and student-relevant learning process.

The objectives of developing creative teacher behavior include:

1. Improving the quality of learning, such as creating more effective and engaging teaching methods.
2. Inspiring students, by providing a learning experience that motivates students to think creatively.
3. Facing changes, by helping teachers adapt to new challenges, such as the implementation of new technology or curricula (Fitriyani et al., 2021).

### **Strategy**

An effective leadership strategy by the school principal involves developing programs aimed at enhancing the professionalism of teachers, encouraging a culture of collaboration and continuous learning, and providing ongoing support and guidance. The leadership emphasizes the importance of reflection and collaboration, with a structured mentoring cycle involving the school principal, instructional coaches, and teachers working together to improve educational outcomes (Ningsih & Karlimah, 2024).

Some strategies for developing creative teacher behavior are presented in the research by (Humaidi & Sain, 2020), including:

- a. **Training and Professional Development**  
Specialized training focused on developing creativity can be provided for teachers. For example, workshops on innovative teaching methods and training in the use of educational technology, such as digital learning applications or interactive media.
- b. **Providing Freedom to Experiment**  
Teachers should be encouraged to try new approaches without fear of failure. The school principal can support this by providing flexibility in designing the curriculum or learning activities and creating space for teachers to share creative ideas with each other.
- c. **Providing Supporting Facilities**  
A creative environment includes technological facilities such as digital devices or online platforms, and collaborative workspaces that allow for teacher discussions.
- d. **Strengthening Teacher Collaboration**

Collaboration among teachers can enrich ideas and increase creativity. This can be achieved through teacher working groups (KKG) to share experiences and regular discussion forums to evaluate and develop teaching methods.

- e. Recognition and Reward for Creative Ideas  
Recognizing and rewarding teachers' creative efforts, both formally and informally, can motivate them to continue innovating.
- f. Utilizing Digital Technology  
Teachers can utilize technology to create more interactive learning experiences, such as Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR), and online learning platforms to support student collaboration.
- g. Creating a Culture of Continuous Learning  
Creating a learning culture where teachers constantly seek ways to enhance their creativity. This can be achieved through access to learning resources such as e-books, educational journals, online communities, or mentoring programs by senior teachers or educational experts.

Based on the above explanation, the benefits include:

- a. More engaging and meaningful learning, where creative teachers are able to present lessons that are relevant to students' needs.
- b. Increased student engagement, as innovative teaching methods improve students' enthusiasm and participation.
- c. Improved teacher professionalism, as teachers become more confident and competent in facing the challenges of modern education.
- d. Improved student achievement, as a creative learning environment helps students achieve good learning outcomes.

## Implementation

The school principal plays a crucial role in academic supervision and professional development, as seen in the PGP program in East Lombok, where training significantly improved teachers' skills in leading and managing the learning process effectively (Gani et al., 2024). This approach is complemented by the school principal's role in implementing an independent curriculum, where they act as mediators and motivators, facilitating teachers' participation in curriculum training and serving as supervisors and evaluators. Strategies to improve teacher performance include fostering communication between the school principal and teachers, conducting independent coaching, and holding evaluation meetings and comparative studies (Sartika et al., 2024).

## 4. Conclusion

The school principal plays a critical role in creating a productive educational environment that supports student development. As a change agent, the principal is essential in fostering learning, skill development, and problem-solving. Through coaching and development, they are able to lead the change agenda, drive strategic initiatives, and inspire progress, particularly in the rapidly evolving education sector. The application of transformational leadership by principals has been shown to enhance teacher creativity and establish a school culture that is adaptive to change, ultimately improving the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could delve deeper into the factors influencing the successful implementation of transformational leadership by principals, especially in the context of diverse school cultures. Additionally, studies focusing on the specific impact of principal coaching approaches on teacher creativity could provide further insights into effective strategies that can be applied across different contexts. Research could also explore the challenges faced by school principals in managing change, particularly related to limited resources, and seek practical solutions to overcome these barriers.

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