

## **Educational Transformation Process Through the Role of Leader Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Tolitoli**

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### **Abstract**

Research on the education transformation process through the role of leader teachers were conducted with the following objectives: 1) to analyze the learning transformation process in SMP Negeri 1 Tolitoli through the role of leader teachers, and 2) to analyze the ecosystem transformation process in SMP Negeri 1 Tolitoli through the role of leader teachers. This research employed a qualitative research method. Data collection procedures involved interviews, observations, and document studies. The data analysis technique followed a process of data collection, data reduction, and data presentation. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation. The results of the research are as follows: 1) the learning transformation process through the role of leader teachers includes a) teaching methods as initiators and motivators for fellow teachers, as well as motivators for students. b) The use of technology greatly aids teachers and students in learning. c) Empowering students in learning brings significant changes to students. 2) The school ecosystem transformation process through the role of leader teachers includes: a) the role of leader teachers as initiators and promoters of educational technology utilization. b) The role of leader teachers as promoters of collaborative culture and sharing best practices.

Keywords: Leader teachers, learning transformation, ecosystem transformation

### **INTRODUCTION**

The transformation of education is an essential and ongoing process that seeks to improve the quality of teaching and learning, adapting to the ever-changing demands of society (Bae, & DeBusk-Lane, 2019). As education systems worldwide evolve, there is a growing emphasis on holistic approaches that not only enhance the academic experiences of students but also create conducive learning environments that support their overall development. The concept of transformation in education encompasses various elements, including curriculum reforms, the adoption of new pedagogical methods, the integration of technology, and changes in school culture. These shifts aim to better prepare students for the complexities of the modern world by fostering skills that extend beyond academic knowledge, such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

In this context, the role of teachers becomes paramount. Teachers are not only responsible for imparting knowledge but are also catalysts for change within their respective educational institutions (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Among them, "leader teachers" are distinguished by their active involvement in fostering educational improvements, guiding their peers, and contributing to the overall advancement of the school environment. Leader teachers possess leadership qualities that enable them to inspire their colleagues, drive instructional innovations, and create a culture of

continuous professional development. They bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that educational transformations are effectively implemented and that they have a lasting impact on both teachers and students.

The current study places particular emphasis on understanding the contributions of leader teachers to the transformation of learning processes and the school ecosystem in SMP Negeri 1 Tolitoli. Situated in the context of this specific school, the research seeks to explore how leader teachers play a dual role: first, in driving the transformation of pedagogical practices and second, in shaping the overall school ecosystem to support a more dynamic and collaborative learning environment. By focusing on SMP Negeri 1 Tolitoli, this study provides an in-depth look at the localized practices and challenges of implementing educational transformations, which may serve as a microcosm for broader systemic changes.

The study aims to address two main objectives. The first objective is to analyze how leader teachers facilitate the transformation of learning processes within the classroom. This includes exploring how they introduce and implement new teaching methods, leverage technology to enhance learning, and empower students to take an active role in their education. Such transformations have the potential to move away from traditional, teacher-centered instruction towards more student-centered approaches that encourage active participation, problem-solving, and the development of critical thinking skills.

The second objective of this research is to examine how leader teachers contribute to the transformation of the school ecosystem. A school ecosystem encompasses the overall environment within which learning takes place, including the physical setting, the social interactions, and the shared values and norms that shape the culture of the school. Leader teachers are instrumental in fostering collaborative practices among educators, promoting the use of technology across different subject areas, and encouraging the sharing of best practices and innovative teaching strategies. These efforts are aimed at creating a supportive and adaptive ecosystem that not only benefits individual classrooms but also enhances the overall school climate.

In light of these objectives, this study seeks to provide insights into the ways in which leader teachers act as change agents within their schools, particularly in the areas of learning and ecosystem transformation. By understanding their roles, practices, and challenges, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on educational leadership and transformation, offering practical recommendations for schools looking to foster similar changes. The findings from SMP Negeri 1 Tolitoli can serve as a reference point for other educational institutions seeking to empower leader teachers to drive transformation at both the classroom and school levels.

## **METHODS**

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative in nature, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of leader teachers in transforming learning and the school ecosystem (Katzenmeyer, & Moller, 2013). A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for this type of exploration, as it allows for a comprehensive examination of complex social phenomena within their natural contexts. Data collection was conducted through three main methods: interviews, observations, and document studies. The interviews provided first-hand insights from leader teachers, other teaching staff, and relevant stakeholders, allowing for a deeper understanding

of their experiences, perspectives, and the strategies they use in their roles. Observations enabled the researcher to witness the leader teachers' actions and interactions within the school environment, providing contextual and behavioral data that are critical for understanding the transformation processes in action. Additionally, document studies, which included the analysis of school policies, teaching materials, and other relevant records, helped to supplement and corroborate the data gathered from interviews and observations, offering a comprehensive picture of the practices and policies influencing learning and ecosystem transformation.

The data analysis was carried out in a systematic and iterative process, following three key stages: data collection, data reduction, and data presentation. During the data collection stage, all information gathered through interviews, observations, and document studies was carefully documented and organized. The subsequent data reduction phase involved refining and filtering the data to identify relevant themes and patterns, thereby making the information more manageable and meaningful for analysis. Finally, in the data presentation stage, the findings were organized and interpreted to provide a clear understanding of the role of leader teachers in educational transformation. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, source triangulation and method triangulation were employed. Source triangulation involved cross-verifying data from different participants and documents, enhancing the credibility of the information. Method triangulation involved using multiple data collection methods to ensure that the findings were consistent and comprehensive, thereby enhancing the study's overall validity and reliability.

## **RESULTS**

The results of the study reveal two primary areas in which leader teachers significantly influence educational transformation: the learning process and the school ecosystem. In terms of the learning transformation process, leader teachers emerge as pivotal figures who initiate and motivate change within the classroom. They inspire both their colleagues and students to develop more effective and engaging teaching methods, fostering a culture of innovation in pedagogy. These teachers not only introduce new approaches but also actively support and mentor their peers in adopting these practices, creating a ripple effect throughout the school. Furthermore, the adoption of technology plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning experience. Leader teachers effectively utilize digital tools and resources to facilitate a more interactive and efficient learning process, thereby supporting students' engagement and comprehension. As a result of these efforts, students are empowered to take a more active role in their own learning, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills that lead to significant improvements in their educational outcomes.

In addition to transforming the learning process, leader teachers also play a vital role in the transformation of the school ecosystem. They act as key promoters of educational technology, not only within individual classrooms but across the entire school setting. By advocating for the integration of technology in teaching and administrative processes, leader teachers contribute to the modernization of the school's educational practices, helping to create an environment where technology is viewed as an essential tool for learning. This transformative role extends beyond technology; leader teachers also work to build a collaborative culture within the school. They encourage their fellow educators to share best practices, engage in reflective discussions, and support one another's professional growth. These practices help foster a sense of community and collegiality, which in turn improves the overall school environment and enhances the quality of education provided.

The combined efforts of leader teachers in transforming both the learning process and the school ecosystem result in a more dynamic, supportive, and effective educational setting. By acting as initiators, mentors, and advocates, these teachers not only improve teaching methods and student outcomes but also contribute to building a school culture that values collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. Their influence goes beyond individual classrooms and affects the entire school, setting the foundation for sustainable change and improvement in educational practices. The study's findings underscore the importance of leader teachers as agents of transformation, demonstrating how their roles can lead to enhanced learning experiences for students and a more cohesive, supportive school environment.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that leader teachers play in transforming both learning processes and the broader school ecosystem, demonstrating how their influence is multifaceted and deeply embedded in the overall functioning of a school. As agents of change, leader teachers are not just classroom instructors but also initiators of innovative practices that encourage the rethinking and reshaping of traditional educational approaches. Their role extends beyond merely implementing new teaching strategies; they serve as models and motivators who inspire their colleagues and students to engage in reflective practices, fostering an environment where learning is viewed as a dynamic and ever-evolving process. This aligns with current educational theories that emphasize the importance of teacher leadership in driving meaningful school change, confirming that the presence of leader teachers can significantly enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the ability of leader teachers to effectively incorporate technology into the learning environment is a key finding that resonates with contemporary trends in education. As schools worldwide strive to adapt to technological advancements, leader teachers act as early adopters and advocates for the integration of digital tools and platforms. Their efforts not only support more interactive and engaging learning experiences but also ensure that both teachers and students develop the necessary digital literacy skills to thrive in a modern educational landscape. This mirrors the growing body of research suggesting that teacher-led technological initiatives can help bridge the gap between policy intentions and classroom realities, making technology a practical and accessible tool for enhancing pedagogy.

Another significant aspect of the study is the empowerment of students as a result of leader teachers' efforts. The findings demonstrate that leader teachers play a crucial role in shifting the educational focus towards student-centered learning. By encouraging students to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering active participation, and supporting the development of critical thinking skills, leader teachers contribute to significant improvements in students' academic and personal growth. This approach is consistent with constructivist theories of education, which advocate for learners to be active agents in their education, engaging in inquiry-based and collaborative activities. Such empowerment is a cornerstone of educational transformation, as it not only improves learning outcomes but also prepares students for life beyond the classroom by equipping them with skills essential for the 21st century.

The study's examination of the transformation of the school ecosystem through the role of leader teachers reveals how these individuals foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement among educators. By promoting the sharing of best practices, encouraging reflective discussions, and facilitating professional development, leader teachers contribute to building a supportive school

environment where educators are motivated to grow and improve together. This collaborative culture is essential for sustainable school development, as it creates an atmosphere where teachers feel valued and supported in their efforts to improve their teaching. It also aligns with research on professional learning communities, which suggests that collaborative cultures within schools are key drivers for successful educational change and that leader teachers are central figures in cultivating such environments.

The implications of these findings for educational policy and practice are substantial. Policymakers and school administrators should recognize the critical role of leader teachers in driving educational transformation and provide opportunities for them to take on leadership roles within their schools. This could involve formalizing the role of leader teachers, providing them with professional development opportunities tailored to leadership skills, and creating structures that allow them to mentor and collaborate with their peers. Schools should also consider how they can support leader teachers in their efforts to integrate technology and foster student-centered learning, ensuring that these initiatives are backed by resources, training, and institutional support. By doing so, schools can create an environment where leader teachers can thrive, leading to more effective teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores the multifaceted role of leader teachers in educational transformation, highlighting their influence on both learning processes and school culture. The ability of these teachers to motivate, guide, and collaborate with others not only enhances classroom practices but also strengthens the overall school ecosystem. Their role as initiators and promoters of innovation is essential for sustainable change, making them key contributors to the development of a progressive and dynamic educational environment. The study's findings reinforce the importance of empowering leader teachers and suggest that their active involvement is crucial for the successful implementation of educational reforms, offering valuable insights for schools and policymakers aiming to achieve long-term improvements in education.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights that leader teachers hold a pivotal role in facilitating transformative changes within both the learning process and the overall school ecosystem. Their responsibilities transcend traditional classroom instruction, positioning them as catalysts for broader educational reform. As initiators and motivators, leader teachers encourage their peers to adopt innovative teaching practices and integrate technology effectively, fostering a culture that values continuous improvement and collaborative growth. Their approach to leadership supports the development of student-centered learning environments, where active student participation and engagement are emphasized, leading to improved academic outcomes and the cultivation of critical skills. These efforts contribute to a paradigm shift in educational practices, moving towards a more dynamic and responsive learning experience that meets the needs of today's students and prepares them for future challenges.

Beyond their influence on pedagogy, leader teachers also play a significant role in shaping the broader school community. They contribute to the development of a school ecosystem characterized by shared values, open communication, and a culture of collaboration. By fostering professional relationships among educators, encouraging reflective practices, and promoting the sharing of best practices, leader teachers help create a supportive environment that extends beyond individual classrooms to the entire school. This holistic approach to educational transformation ensures that

changes are sustainable and rooted in a community-wide commitment to improvement. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of recognizing and empowering leader teachers as key agents of change, whose impact is critical to driving both instructional innovation and the development of cohesive, thriving school communities. Their role is essential in ensuring that educational transformation is not only implemented effectively but also sustained over time, leading to meaningful and lasting improvements in both teaching and learning.

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