

INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT MI MA'ARIF NU 01 KAJONGAN

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan kepemimpinan inspirational motivation dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru di MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan Kecamatan Bojongsari Kabupaten Purbalingga. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada bagaimana kepala madrasah memberikan motivasi inspiratif melalui penghargaan dan koreksi terhadap pencapaian target kerja guru. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian meliputi kepala madrasah, guru, serta pihak pendukung yang terlibat dalam pengelolaan kinerja guru. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model interaktif Miles & Huberman yang mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, dengan validitas data diperkuat melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aspek motivasi inspiratif yang telah dilaksanakan oleh kepala madrasah antara lain memberikan penghargaan (reward) kepada guru berprestasi sebagai bentuk perhatian dan dorongan untuk meningkatkan kinerja. Selain itu, kepala madrasah juga melakukan koreksi secara langsung apabila target yang telah ditetapkan belum tercapai secara maksimal, sehingga guru terdorong untuk melakukan perbaikan dan peningkatan kualitas kerja. Simpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kepemimpinan inspirational motivation berperan penting dalam membangun semangat kerja guru, meningkatkan rasa tanggung jawab, serta menciptakan budaya kerja yang produktif. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penekanan bahwa kombinasi antara pemberian penghargaan dan koreksi terarah menjadi strategi efektif dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru, sekaligus memperkuat praktik kepemimpinan inspiratif di lingkungan madrasah.

Kata kunci : inspirational motivation, kepemimpinan, kinerja guru

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the application of inspirational motivation leadership in improving teacher performance at MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency. The focus of the study is directed at how the madrasah principal provides inspirational motivation through awards and corrections to the achievement of teacher work targets. The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observation, and documentation. The research subjects include the madrasah principal, teachers, and supporting parties involved in managing teacher performance. Data analysis was carried

out using the Miles & Huberman interactive model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with data validity strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the study indicate that aspects of inspirational motivation that have been implemented by the madrasah principal include providing awards (rewards) to outstanding teachers as a form of attention and encouragement to improve performance. In addition, the madrasah principal also makes direct corrections if the set targets have not been achieved optimally, so that teachers are encouraged to make improvements and increase the quality of work. The conclusion of this study confirms that inspirational motivation leadership plays an important role in building teacher work enthusiasm, increasing a sense of responsibility, and creating a productive work culture. The novelty of this research lies in the emphasis that the combination of rewarding and targeted correction is an effective strategy in improving teacher performance, while strengthening the practice of inspirational leadership in the madrasah environment.

Keywords: *inspirational motivation, leadership, teacher performance*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the spearhead of the educational process, making improving their performance a pressing matter. Good teacher performance directly impacts the quality of learning, student competency achievement, and the success of national education goals. According to Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are required to possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies, which must be demonstrated in their daily work (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005).

In a global context, improving teacher performance is also a requirement of the 21st century, which emphasizes critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills (Murniyati, 2025). Teachers are required not only to teach but also to be facilitators, motivators, and inspirations for students. Therefore, the urgency of improving teacher performance cannot be ignored, as the quality of education is highly dependent on teacher quality.

Ideally, teacher performance improvement is achieved through ongoing coaching, professional development, and visionary leadership support. According to (Hasibuan & Hadijaya, 2024), teacher performance will improve if schools provide a conducive work environment, opportunities for self-development, and a fair reward system. Furthermore, teacher performance improvement should be

directed at achieving clear competency standards, with measurable indicators such as lesson planning, lesson implementation, evaluation of learning outcomes, and ongoing professional development. Thus, improving teacher performance is not merely administrative but also substantive in supporting the quality of learning.

However, in reality, many teachers still face obstacles in improving their performance. Several studies indicate that low motivation, limited facilities, and a lack of leadership support are the main factors hindering teacher performance (Fitria & Slamet, 2024; Shopian, 2025; Torimtubun et al., 2025). This impacts the quality of learning and student competency achievement. Furthermore, teachers are still found to be suboptimal in utilizing learning technology, lacking innovation in teaching methods, and lacking in reflection and self-development. This condition shows that there is a gap between the ideal of teacher performance and the reality in the field.

One possible solution is through inspirational motivational leadership. This leadership style emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and provide a clear vision to teachers, thus encouraging them to optimally improve their performance. Inspirational motivation is a component of transformational leadership that can galvanize the work ethic and commitment of subordinates (Sabariah et al., 2024; Siswatiningsih et al., 2019). With inspirational leadership, teachers will feel valued, supported, and share a shared goal of improving the quality of learning. This not only increases teachers' intrinsic motivation but also creates a positive and productive work culture in schools.

This research is novel because it highlights teacher performance improvement from an inspirational motivational leadership perspective. Most previous research has focused more on individual teacher competency, training, or motivation (Fatimah et al., 2023; Nisak & Rahmah, 2024; Shopian, 2025), while aspects of inspirational leadership have not been studied in depth. By focusing on inspirational-motivational leadership, this research offers a new perspective that improving teacher performance depends not only on individual abilities but also on leadership support that can inspire and motivate. This novelty is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational leadership studies, as

well as practical implications for schools in improving teacher performance through inspirational leadership styles.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, with the aim of in-depth description of the practice of inspirational motivational leadership in improving teacher performance. This design was chosen because it can highlight the phenomenon of leadership contextually and naturally in the school environment. The research informants consisted of the principal as the leader, teachers as the main implementers of learning, and supporting parties such as the vice principal or academic coordinator. Subject selection was carried out purposively, namely based on considerations of their relevance and direct involvement in leadership activities and improving teacher performance (Arieska & Herdiani, 2018). Data were obtained through in-depth interviews to explore the perceptions and experiences of teachers and principals, observations of leadership activities and learning processes in the classroom, and document analysis in the form of work programs, evaluation reports, and school activity records. Data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman interactive model, which includes the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, so that the research results can provide a valid picture of the influence of inspirational motivational leadership on teacher performance.

DISCUSSION

The principal as a leader provides inspirational motivation to teachers at MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency. The steps taken by the principal in the inspirational motivation aspect in building teacher enthusiasm to improve performance are to provide appreciation and recognition for teacher performance. As conveyed by Mr. Misbakhudin as the principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, who explained that: "For every teacher who excels, we always give them rewards, there are gifts, praise and in the form of words. The award aims to provide recognition for

outstanding teachers and encourage the work enthusiasm of other teachers to be even better."

One way that madrasah principals motivate teachers is through awards. Awards significantly support teacher performance improvement and encourage teachers who have not performed well to strive for excellence (Imron, 2023; Ritonga & Prasetyo, 2019). Providing awards to teachers has significant benefits in increasing their motivation, performance, and commitment to professional duties. Awards serve as a form of appreciation for teachers' dedication and hard work, fostering a sense of appreciation and recognition from both the school and the community.

Research by (Husnunnadia & Masyithoh, 2024) shows that appropriate awards can strengthen intrinsic motivation, increase job satisfaction, and encourage teachers to be more creative and innovative in teaching. Furthermore, awards also create a positive work climate, strengthen loyalty, and foster a healthy competitive culture among teachers. Thus, awards are not merely symbolic, but an effective managerial strategy for continuously improving the quality of learning and teacher performance.

The researchers wanted to determine whether the leadership of the principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, is viewed as an inspirational leader who motivates teachers to improve their performance by providing appreciation and recognition. This is supported by statements from teachers at MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency. In an interview with Mr. Badrudin Nur Hasan, a sixth-grade teacher, he stated:

"The principal always provides appreciation and recognition. Currently, appreciation and recognition for high-achieving teachers is an effective way to boost teacher performance. Teachers who receive awards will feel that their performance and efforts have been recognized by the school. Teachers whose performance is not yet optimal are also encouraged to keep up with high-achieving teachers."

Appreciation is a form of recognition that can motivate teachers to improve their performance, and the principal's attention to teachers can motivate teachers who lack enthusiasm in carrying out their duties. Mrs. Eka, a teacher at MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, stated:

“When I receive appreciation and recognition as a teacher, I feel the role of the principal. Mr. Misbakhudin always recognizes our hard work in teaching by expressing gratitude or praise for our maximum performance. His appreciation and attention to the madrasah teachers is what adds value, in my opinion.”

Appreciation and recognition given by the madrasah principal are valued by teachers. When teachers' hard work and dedication are noticed and recognized, they are motivated to improve. Likewise, teachers with low performance are motivated to keep up with other teachers. Lain.

The principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, also has a strategy for motivating teachers to achieve established goals. Teachers whose work enthusiasm is declining are encouraged to be more active. The principal consistently sets a good example and motivates them with strategies to improve optimal performance. He stated:

"My efforts usually include checking each section at least once a month, providing daily motivation to teachers, and treating teachers as friends or work partners, rather than as leaders and subordinates, to create a more harmonious relationship. I also appreciate teachers who have good performance and encourage discipline. I always leave early so that teachers can emulate me and be more disciplined."

The principal's actions include motivating teachers by making them work partners, providing appreciation, and demonstrating discipline. This is further supported by a teacher's explanation:

“The principal's efforts include reprimanding teachers for their lack of discipline. The principal also motivates teachers, especially during meetings. He expresses his appreciation by thanking and expressing pride in teachers who have improved performance. The principal is also given the opportunity to participate in activities outside of his usual schedule, such as substituting for a principal's meeting if the principal is unable to attend. This is a form of appreciation or reward that is an honor for us. Furthermore, he provides daily motivation during our meetings. When we make mistakes, we receive direct reprimands. The principal also assigns responsibility to teachers according to their respective duties.”

In line with the interview with the madrasah principal, he stated:

"I always prioritize providing inspirational encouragement and motivation. I implement policies that support teachers and staff in always seeking the best solutions when problems arise. This helps them regain their strength and boost their work ethic."

The next aspect of inspirational motivation is related to the target of improving teacher performance. The Principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Kajongan Village, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, has a specific target, namely improving the quality of character education by reflecting noble morals. The principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, explained the following:

"My priority target as a religious-based educational institution is to maintain Islamic character. Improving the quality of character-based education and outputs that embody noble character are crucial for teachers to achieve, in addition to students' academic abilities. When a teacher is not achieving these goals, I usually review each section at least once a month by providing problem-solving assistance to the teacher, making teachers part of a team rather than a leader and subordinates, to foster harmony. I also appreciate teachers who are able to provide learning based on strengthening noble character. I always emphasize to each teacher the need to be ready to exemplify behavior that reflects noble character for their students."

The target of improving the quality of character-based education aligns with the following interview with Mr. Badrudin Nur Hasan, a sixth-grade teacher at MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency:

"The quality of education that reflects character is important to demonstrate our school's identity as a faith-based school. In addition to the academic capabilities offered, students with noble character are also a key element of this school's identity. Teachers are required to balance students' academic abilities with their students' excellence in morals. If teachers encounter obstacles, we address them and develop a remedial plan to maximize the achievement of the goals

The principal further stated that when targets do not meet the planned targets, the obstacles will be addressed. The following interview with the principal, Mr. Misbakhudin, is as follows:

"If the target doesn't meet the planned objectives, I will correct the cause. For example, if the target for improving the quality of character education, especially in terms of morality and student discipline, is not achieved, then the steps I take are to reprimand the teacher and provide motivation so that the teacher can first set a disciplined example so that students can emulate it."

Ms. Beni, the faith and morals teacher, echoed the principal's message. Ms. Beni explained:

"Mr. Misbakhudin emphasized to us that the main target, besides improving academic performance, is to improve the quality of students' morals, reflecting their character. His efforts include reprimanding teachers for lack

of discipline and for failing to achieve the set targets. The principal doesn't just reprimand us but also corrects our mistakes. For example, not arriving on time is a reflection of poor morals because it reflects a neglect of responsibility. Consequently, students will also be late to school."

Regarding the aspect of inspirational motivation, related to the achievement of targets that do not align with the planned objectives, the Principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan provides motivation to teachers so that teachers can be role models for students. According to (Rahayu, 2018), inspirational motivation is the principal's ability to motivate all teachers and employees to have a commitment to the organization's vision and support team spirit in achieving educational goals at the school.

Based on the description above, it was found that the motivation implemented by the Principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency, includes: (1) providing awards (rewards) to teachers who excel as a form of attention and motivation to improve their performance; (2) motivating teachers to achieve predetermined goals by providing examples of good performance demonstrated by the principal himself; (3) the target set by the principal in improving teacher performance is to emphasize the quality of education that reflects the character of noble morals; and (4) the madrasah principal also does not hesitate to make corrections if the targets set have not been achieved optimally. The madrasah principal also discusses with teachers to develop corrective steps to optimize target achievement.

CONCLUSION

The inspirational motivation aspect that has been implemented by the Principal of MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency is to provide awards (rewards) to teachers who have achieved achievement as a form of attention and motivation to improve teachers' performance. The principal also does not hesitate to make corrections if the targets set have not been achieved optimally. The research recommendation based on the results found at MI Ma'arif NU 01 Kajongan, Bojongsari District, Purbalingga Regency is the need to strengthen the practice of inspirational motivation-based leadership more systematically. The principal can develop a more varied reward mechanism, not

only in the form of formal rewards, but also non-material forms of appreciation such as opportunities for self-development or publication of teacher work. In addition, corrections to target achievement should be carried out with a coaching and mentoring approach, so that teachers not only receive evaluations, but also concrete directions for improvement. Further research can recommend the development of an inspirational leadership model that integrates awards, mentoring, and consistent motivational communication. Thus, teacher performance can be improved sustainably through leadership that not only supervises, but also inspires and motivates.

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