

THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMASIONAL LEADERSHIP, THE GROW ME COACHING MODEL, AND WORK MOTIVATION ON TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF BULU DISTRICT REMBANG

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of transformational leadership, the GROW ME coaching model, and work motivation on teachers' instructional innovation in public elementary schools in Bulu District, Rembang Regency. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 103 teachers across 18 schools with validated questionnaires. Descriptive results show that all three independent variables, as well as instructional innovation, were in the "high" category. Multiple regression analysis confirmed that transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.300$, $p < 0.05$), the GROW ME coaching model ($\beta = 0.266$, $p < 0.05$), and work motivation ($\beta = 0.322$, $p < 0.05$) each had a positive and significant effect on instructional innovation. Among them, work motivation exerted the strongest effect. Simultaneously, the three variables explained 54.2% of the variance in instructional innovation, while 45.8% was influenced by other factors. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated analysis of leadership, coaching, and motivation within one model, an approach rarely used in elementary school contexts. By focusing on Bulu District, where innovation remains uneven despite government support, this study provides both theoretical enrichment and practical recommendations for principals, teachers, and policymakers in strengthening innovation-oriented practices under the Merdeka Curriculum.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Education in the 21st century demands a fundamental transformation in both processes and outcomes. Learning is no longer limited to the mastery of content, but must also focus on developing higher-order competencies such as

critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy (Nusantara, 2024). These skills are considered essential for preparing students to adapt to rapid changes in technology, globalization, and socio-economic dynamics. The Merdeka Curriculum reinforces this paradigm by emphasizing flexible, student-centered learning that adapts to the evolving demands of society. Despite this effort, the 2025 Education Report highlights persistent disparities in innovation practices, with some schools showing declining innovation scores caused by weak utilization of technology, lack of continuous training, and minimal institutional support. This condition indicates that educational transformation in Indonesia still faces serious challenges, particularly in the domain of teacher instructional innovation.

Teachers hold a central role as agents of change and innovation in schools. They are the ones who directly interact with students and create meaningful learning experiences. Kurniyati (2021) warns that teachers who fail to update their teaching methods risk a decline in teaching effectiveness, whereas adaptive teachers are capable of fostering impactful learning. Similarly, Wannesia et al. (2022) emphasize that effective teachers are those who continuously learn, remain open to change, and consistently refine their practices to provide the best learning opportunities for students. However, empirical data in Bulu District show that this ideal has not yet been fully realized. Since 2021, the government has distributed Chromebooks to support technology-based learning, but only 26% of teachers actually utilize them in classroom activities. Hazizah & Rigianti (2021) explain that this gap arises from facility limitations and generational differences in digital skills among teachers, while Sutirna (2019) asserts that mastery of technology is a prerequisite for advancing education in a positive direction. Furthermore, Hapsari & Mamah Fatimah (2021) stress that teachers are expected to generate new ideas that create active, creative, effective, and enjoyable learning, in line with Kurniyati's (2021) and Ekawati & Wardono's (2014) argument that an innovation culture is the key to sustainable competitiveness in education.

Among the many factors influencing teachers' instructional innovation, transformational leadership is one of the most decisive. Bass (as cited in Insan, 2017) defines transformational leadership as a leadership style that transforms subordinates' work environments, motivation, and values to achieve long-term organizational goals. This leadership style, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, is considered capable of inspiring teachers to innovate. Research by Rahayu & Iskandar (2023) confirms that principals with transformational leadership can motivate teachers to collaborate and integrate technology into teaching, while Taoefik et al. (2017) empirically demonstrate its significant influence on teachers' innovative behavior. Despite its importance, field data show that 67% of principals in Bulu District have not applied transformational leadership optimally, indicating a gap between theoretical expectations and actual practice.

Another important factor in supporting teacher innovation is academic supervision based on coaching. Coaching is more than just giving instructions; it is a process of mentoring that focuses on developing teachers' potential through constructive dialogue. The GROW ME model—Goal, Reality, Options, Will, Monitoring, Evaluation—provides a structured framework that encourages teachers to set clear goals, analyze classroom realities, explore alternative strategies, commit to action, and continuously evaluate their practices (Kemendikbud, 2014; Ng, 2005). Asbari & Prasetya (2021) highlight that effective coaching improves teachers' confidence, morale, knowledge, and skills, thereby strengthening their capacity to innovate in instructional practices. However, observations in Bulu District show that 80% of principals have never systematically applied coaching in academic supervision, suggesting that the potential of the GROW ME model has not yet been maximized in elementary schools.

In addition to leadership and coaching, work motivation plays a crucial psychological role in driving teachers' innovative behavior. Motivation influences the extent to which teachers are willing to exert effort in generating new ideas, modifying teaching strategies, and sustaining innovation. Setyaningrum et al. (2024) found that the effect of motivation on innovation is even greater than that of transformational leadership, while Hendri & Iswantir (2024) report that work motivation contributes 33.5% to teachers' innovative activities, including exploring opportunities, creating ideas, and maintaining instructional improvements. Yet, observations in Bulu District indicate that many teachers still show low motivation: they are less diligent, tend to use teaching tools without modification, and are not actively involved in developing innovative learning methods. This condition illustrates that without sufficient

motivation, teachers will find it difficult to realize adaptive learning practices in line with the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In conclusion, teachers' instructional innovation is shaped by the interplay of transformational leadership, the GROW ME coaching model, and work motivation. These three factors provide a comprehensive framework for understanding why innovation among teachers in Bulu District remains uneven. The evident gap between theoretical expectations and actual practices underscores the urgency of examining these factors more deeply, which will be elaborated through the theoretical framework of this study.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an ex post facto causal design. According to Sugiyono (2019), quantitative research is used to investigate a specific population or sample through data collection using research instruments, statistical data analysis, and aims to test predetermined hypotheses. The ex post facto design was selected because the independent variables had already occurred, allowing the researcher to reveal facts based on existing measurements without providing direct treatment to the research variables (Creswell, 2018).

The research population comprised all elementary school teachers in Bulu Subdistrict, Rembang Regency, totaling 139 individuals. The sample was determined using proportional random sampling, as suggested by Arikunto (2019), who stated that if the population is large, a sample of 10–15% or 20–25% of the total population can be taken. Based on calculations using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, the sample size in this study was 103 teachers.

The research variables consisted of four variables: transformational leadership (X1), the GROW ME coaching model (X2), work motivation (X3), and instructional innovation (Y). Transformational leadership was measured using four indicators: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass in Insan, 2017). The GROW ME coaching model was measured using six indicators: Goal, Reality, Options, Will, Monitoring, and Evaluation (Kemendikbud, 2014; Ng, 2005). Work motivation was measured through intrinsic indicators, including job satisfaction, responsibility, and interest, as well as extrinsic indicators, including rewards, work relationships, and leadership support (Setyaningrum et al., 2024; Hendri & Iswantir, 2024). Instructional innovation was measured based on the indicators of idea creation, idea implementation, and continuous development (Hapsari & Fatimah, 2021; Kurniyati, 2021).

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from a score of 1 (strongly disagree) to a score of 5 (strongly agree). The research instrument underwent content validity testing through expert judgment and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to Ghazali (2018), an instrument can be considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70.

Data analysis was carried out in several stages. First, prerequisite tests were performed to ensure that the assumptions of regression analysis were met. The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K-S) test. The K-S test was chosen because the sample size exceeded 50, making it more suitable than the Shapiro–Wilk test which is generally recommended for smaller samples (Ghozali, 2018). The linearity test was conducted using ANOVA to examine the linear relationship between independent and dependent variables. Multicollinearity was assessed through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values, as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). In addition to these three, other regression assumptions were also considered, namely: (1) Homoskedasticity, to ensure that the residuals had constant variance across all values of the independent variables; (2) Independence of errors, verified using the Durbin–Watson statistic, to check that residuals were not autocorrelated; and (3) No extreme outliers, examined through standardized residual plots, to prevent bias in estimation (Santoso, 2018; Ghazali, 2018).

After the assumptions were met, hypothesis testing was performed using multiple linear regression analysis with the aid of SPSS software. According to Santoso (2018), multiple linear regression is appropriate to determine the effect of two or more independent variables on a dependent variable. The interpretation of the analysis results was based on the significance value at a 5% (0.05) error rate, where the research hypothesis was accepted if the significance value was < 0.05 and rejected if the significance value was > 0.05 .

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data for this study were obtained from questionnaires completed by 103 elementary school teachers in Bulu District, Rembang Regency, representing 18 schools. The four analyzed variables included transformational leadership, the GROW ME coaching model, work motivation, and instructional innovation. Descriptive statistical analysis indicated that the highest mean score was recorded for work motivation (129.540), while the lowest mean score was for instructional innovation (125.370). The widest score range was found in work motivation (69), while the narrowest range was in transformational leadership (62). Across all variables, the maximum score was identical at 150, whereas the lowest minimum score was observed in work motivation (81). In terms of data variability, transformational leadership showed the highest standard deviation (14.240) and work motivation the lowest (13.080). These results suggest that although teachers generally reported high levels of motivation, variations in leadership practices were more pronounced among schools.

Dimension Analysis

The dimension analysis provided further insight. For transformational leadership, the *inspirational motivation* dimension had the highest mean score (32.50 or 27.1% of the total variable score), while *individualized consideration* recorded the lowest (29.80 or 24.8%). This indicates that principals are relatively effective in providing vision and inspiration, but less consistent in giving personal attention to individual teachers. This finding aligns with Rahayu & Iskandar (2023), who noted that principals often emphasize collective goals but may lack the time or resources to attend to each teacher's unique needs.

In the GROW ME coaching model, the *Goal* dimension scored the highest (22.40 or 18.2%), while *Monitoring* scored the lowest (19.30 or 15.7%). This suggests that while principals are capable of helping teachers establish clear goals, systematic follow-up and progress monitoring are still weak. This weakness could stem from principals' limited time allocation for coaching, or from the absence of structured monitoring mechanisms in academic supervision (Asbari & Prasetya, 2021). Ng (2005) also highlighted that in many educational settings, the implementation of GROW ME tends to focus on goal-setting rather than consistent monitoring and feedback, which are crucial for sustained teacher development.

For work motivation, the *intrinsic motivation* dimension achieved a higher mean score (68.20 or 52.6%) compared to *extrinsic motivation* (61.34 or 47.4%). This reflects that teachers are more driven by internal factors such as interest, responsibility, and satisfaction, rather than external rewards or recognition. This condition is consistent with Setyaningrum et al. (2024), who found that intrinsic motivation often provides a stronger and more sustainable influence on teachers' innovative behavior.

In instructional innovation, the highest score was in the *idea generation* dimension (42.10 or 33.6%), and the lowest was in *continuous development* (39.00 or 31.2%). This indicates that teachers are relatively capable of producing new ideas, but encounter challenges in sustaining and refining innovations over time. The lack of follow-up support, training, or systematic evaluation may contribute to this gap, as noted by Hapsari & Mamah Fatimah (2021), who argued that innovation requires not only creativity but also consistency and long-term commitment.

Assumption Tests

The assumption tests confirmed the feasibility of regression analysis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test yielded significance values greater than 0.05 for all variables, indicating normal distribution. Linearity tests confirmed significant linear relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable ($p < 0.05$). Multicollinearity tests produced Tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis showed that transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on instructional innovation, contributing 28.7% to its variation. The GROW ME coaching model also had a positive

and significant effect, contributing 31.5%. Work motivation had the largest positive and significant effect, contributing 33.5%. Simultaneously, the three independent variables contributed a cumulative 72.4% to instructional innovation, with the remaining 27.6% influenced by factors beyond the research model.

Discussion

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Instructional Innovation

The analysis results indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on instructional innovation among elementary school teachers in Bulu District, Rembang. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.610 (strong category) with a significance value of 0.000 demonstrates a close relationship. ANOVA testing further supports this finding, with an F-value of 59.698 greater than the F-table value of 3.934 and an R^2 of 37.1%, meaning that more than one-third of the variation in instructional innovation can be explained by transformational leadership.

Theoretically, this finding aligns with Harsoyo's (2022) view, citing Yukl, that transformational leadership is a process of influencing individuals to undergo profound changes in attitudes, beliefs, and values, thereby driving performance beyond expectations. Empirical support is also found in the studies of Ariyani & Hidayati (2018) and Hariyanti & Izzati (2024), which reveal that transformational leaders inspire, stimulate critical thinking, and create an environment conducive to teachers' innovative behavior. In the elementary school context, principals who provide individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspiration are able to foster teachers' courage to experiment with new teaching methods. Kurniyati's (2018) research reinforces this, showing that intellectual stimulation significantly contributes to innovative behavior, while attention to individual needs encourages teachers to adapt to student needs.

Practical implications for school principals, these findings highlight the importance of building a leadership style that does not stop at administrative duties but extends to actively inspiring teachers. Principals should, for instance, (1) communicate a clear vision for innovation, (2) hold regular reflection sessions with teachers to stimulate new ideas, and (3) practice individualized mentoring to accommodate differences in teachers' readiness. For the education office, training programs in transformational leadership should be prioritized to prepare principals who can act as true agents of change in their schools.

The Influence of the GROW ME Coaching Model on Instructional Innovation

Correlation analysis shows a coefficient of 0.626 (strong category) with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between the implementation of the GROW ME coaching model and instructional innovation. ANOVA results show an F-value of 64.958 greater than the F-table value of 3.934 with an R^2 of 39.1%, signifying that coaching contributes substantially to instructional innovation.

The GROW ME model (Goals, Reality, Options, Will, Monitoring, Evaluation) has proven effective in helping teachers identify goals, assess conditions, explore options, plan concrete actions, and monitor and evaluate achievement. In line with Pasloe (1999) in Kuswidiarti (2020) and Ng (2005), coaching is a structured process aimed at enhancing potential and performance through self-awareness and personal responsibility. The study by Irawati, Winoto, & Andriono (2024) confirms that implementing GROW ME coaching increases teachers' creativity in designing varied teaching strategies. Additional support comes from Sekianti & Yulia (2024), who found a positive influence of coaching on employee performance, which is analogously relevant to the role of school principals in guiding teachers.

The low score on the Monitoring dimension in this study suggests that principals need to move beyond merely helping teachers set goals. They should establish systematic follow-up mechanisms, such as (1) scheduled coaching check-ins, (2) the use of teaching portfolios to track progress, and (3) peer coaching groups that allow teachers to monitor each other's innovations. For the education office, professional development programs should train principals not only in goal-setting but also in monitoring and evaluation techniques to ensure that innovations are sustained, not temporary.

The Influence of Work Motivation on Instructional Innovation

Work motivation has a positive and significant correlation with instructional innovation, with a coefficient of 0.621 (strong category) and a significance value of 0.000. ANOVA testing records an F-value of 63.383 greater than the F-table value of 3.934, with an R^2 of 38.6%, indicating a considerable contribution of work motivation to teachers' innovation. Uno (2016) defines motivation as a fundamental drive that moves individuals to act, while Suswati (2022) emphasizes its role as a key determinant of performance. The studies of Maysarah & Fadli (2024) and Hendri & Iswanti (2024) find that teachers with high motivation tend to develop new methods and innovative strategies in teaching.

The finding that intrinsic motivation is stronger than extrinsic motivation implies that schools and policymakers must design strategies that nurture internal drives rather than rely solely on external rewards. Concrete steps include: (1) creating a school culture that values experimentation and accepts mistakes as part of learning, (2) recognizing and celebrating teachers' innovative efforts, not only through material rewards but also through professional appreciation, and (3) ensuring that workload distribution is fair so that teachers have the energy to innovate. The education office can strengthen this by developing non-financial reward systems, such as innovation awards, opportunities to present best practices at conferences, or promotion pathways tied to innovation contributions.

The Simultaneous Influence of Transformational Leadership, the GROW ME Coaching Model, and Work Motivation on Instructional Innovation

Multiple regression testing reveals that the three variables jointly have a significant effect on instructional innovation, with a multiple correlation coefficient of 0.736 (strong category), an R^2 of 54.2%, and an F-value of 39.084 greater than the F-table value of 2.696. Partially, all three variables have positive coefficients: transformational leadership (0.300), the GROW ME coaching model (0.266), and work motivation (0.322), indicating each variable's contribution to enhancing instructional innovation. The study of Setyaningrum, Taufiqulloh, & Habibi (2024) shows that the combination of transformational leadership and work motivation triggers innovative teacher behavior. Andriani, Kesumawati, & Kristiawan (2018) further affirm that transformative principals create an environment conducive to innovation. From a coaching perspective, Asbari (2024) finds that coaching contributes to improving teachers' self-efficacy, which serves as the foundation for the courage to innovate.

This study reveals that innovation in teaching cannot be explained by a single factor alone. School principals need to simultaneously apply transformational leadership, structured coaching, and motivation-enhancing strategies to foster sustained instructional innovation. For teachers, this underscores the importance of engaging proactively in coaching processes and maintaining self-motivation to sustain new practices. For the education office, policies should be integrated: leadership training for principals, coaching workshops, and motivation-building programs (such as communities of practice or innovation grants) must be combined rather than implemented in isolation.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that transformational leadership, the GROW ME coaching model, and work motivation have a positive and significant effect on teachers' learning innovation in elementary schools in Bulu District, Rembang, both partially and simultaneously. Partially, transformational leadership contributes 37.1%, the GROW ME coaching model contributes 39.1%, and work motivation contributes 38.6% to the improvement of teachers' learning innovation. Simultaneously, these three variables collectively contribute 54.2%, indicating that the combination of effective transformational leadership, structured implementation of the GROW ME coaching model, and high work motivation can create a conducive environment for the development and implementation of learning innovation in elementary schools.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of three main variables transformational leadership, the GROW ME coaching model, and work motivation within a single analytical model specifically focused on teachers' learning innovation in elementary schools in Bulu District. This study also provides empirical insights into the dominant dimensions of each variable, which can serve as a practical reference in developing strategies to improve the quality of education at the elementary school level.

The limitations of this research include the restricted sample scope, which only covered elementary school teachers in a single district, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to other educational levels or regions. Furthermore, the study employed a quantitative approach using questionnaires, without exploring qualitative data that could enrich the in-depth understanding of the mechanisms underlying the relationships between variables. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to expand the coverage to different regions and educational levels, enabling cross-regional and cross-level comparisons. Subsequent studies are also encouraged to adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, other variables such as organizational culture, pedagogical competence, and technological support could be incorporated to identify additional factors influencing teachers' learning innovation..

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