

Student Character Education Towards Excellence: Optimization of Transformational Leadership of Lecturers

Meditatio Situmorang¹, Chintya Megaria Situmeang²

¹ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; meditatiositumorang1965@gmail.com

² Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; megariachintya@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

character;
transformational leadership;
lecturer

Article history:

Received 2022-06-05

Revised 2022-08-12

Accepted 2022-11-30

ABSTRACT

Lecturers as educators have a very large role in determining the quality of higher education graduates. Transformational leadership becomes a leadership style that can be used by lecturers to direct and guide students to have superior character. lecturers who teach in the Christian Leadership Department have implemented this transformational leadership, although it has not been implemented thoroughly. Furthermore, problems arise about the application of transformational leadership of lecturers that have not been maximized, making students not have a truly superior character. This research was conducted to find out how lecturers apply transformational leadership and how it affects the students of the Christian Leadership Department? This research will examine students in the Christian Leadership Department, Faculty of Theological Sciences IAKN Tarutung about the application of transformational leadership of lecturers and their influence in shaping student character. Through this research, it is hoped that lecturers can apply transformational leadership optimally, because the transformational leadership applied by lecturers is influential in building superior student character. Through the application of transformational leadership, students experience changes and have superior character.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Meditatio Situmorang

Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; meditatiositumorang1965@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is not only a process or system of knowledge transfer to satisfy human curiosity, but education becomes a process of changing the ethics, norms or morals of each student (Pitaloka, 2020). Higher education is an educational unit that organizes higher education, where lecturers as educators and students as students carry out the teaching and learning process. IAKN Tarutung as one of the universities that has a Faculty of Theological Sciences with one of its Departments, namely Christian Leadership has compiled a vision to produce quality higher education graduates. The vision of the

Christian Leadership Department is "To Produce Christian Leadership Scholars who are Competent, Superior, Competitive and Have a Serving Spirit, and Very Well Accredited in 2024" (Sinambela, 2021).

Character is a distinctive-good value (knowing the value of good, willing to do good, real good living and having a good impact on the environment) that are imprinted in oneself and are embodied in behavior (Sugiyono, 2018). In producing students with superior character, lecturers as educators who have a role in the classroom are not only limited to carrying out the teaching and learning process to transfer knowledge, but lecturers need to have transformational leadership in order to produce students who are in accordance with the vision of the Christian Leadership Department.

Transformational Leadership is a leadership style where the leader mingles in the midst of his members, always pays attention to the needs of his group and considers the group's ability to do tasks. The relationship created is also not as rigid as the employer with subordinates, but like one's own brother and the leader is also willing to accept input and suggestions from the person he leads (Hutahaean, 2021).

Based on observations and observations made by the research team, lecturers who teach in the Christian Leadership Department have implemented this transformational leadership, although it has not been implemented thoroughly. There are several characteristics in transformational leadership that have not been applied by lecturers who teach in the Christian Leadership Department, so that students of the Christian Leadership Department do not yet have superior character. These superior traits include: self-discipline, confidence, perseverance, progressive, assertive, focused, visionary, seeing opportunities, passion and having a purpose.

2. METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative method, which is often also called a naturalistic research method, because the research is carried out in natural conditions and emphasizes the description naturally (Sugiyono, 2020). This is supported by Bog and Taylor's opinion cited by Lexy Moleong who defines that qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behaviors (Moleong, 2021).

This research will use qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach, meaning that with this method, researchers are guided to explore and describe social situations thoroughly, broadly and deeply. This research was conducted at the Christian Leadership Department, Faculty of Theological Sciences, Tarutung Institute of Christian Religion (IAKN), located on Campus II Silangkitang, which was held from May to September 2022. The data in this study are people who can provide information or information as data in the study. This data is in the form of primary data and secondary data. In this case, primary data will be obtained from student representatives of the Christian Leadership Department. As for secondary data, researchers obtain from the results of documentation, literature and websites that support the research.

In data collection, the techniques carried out by researchers are interviews (interviews) and observations. The number of respondents in this study was 10 (ten) people consisting of students in the IAKN Tarutung Christian Leadership Department, which was conducted by means of semi-structured interviews, where researchers compiled questions first.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Transformational Leadership

Etymologically, transformational leadership comes from two (2) words, namely leadership and transformational. The definition of leadership in general comes from the English word leadership with the basic word leader meaning leader. The word leader in the New Testament, which is Greek is translated from the word hodegos (noun) which means leader, guide and the word hodegein (verb) which means to lead and guide (Tambunan, 2018). Transformational Leadership is a leadership style where the leader mingles in the midst of his members, always pays attention to the needs of his group

and considers the group's ability to do tasks. The relationship created is also not as rigid as the employer with subordinates, but like one's own brother and the leader is also willing to accept input and suggestions from the person he leads (Hutahaean, 2021).

Transformational Leadership Characteristics

According to Avolio, et al., the components (characteristics) of transformational leadership are as follows (Stone, Russel, & Patterson, 2019):

- a. Idealized Influence (or charismatic influence)
- b. Idealized influence means that a transformational leader must be able to be a tool of change and a role model, so that it is appreciated, admired, and followed by the person he leads. In other words the leader must have charisma. The leader with his charisma will be able to move the person he leads to follow him.
- c. Inspirational Motivation
- d. Inspirational motivation means the character of a leader who is able to apply high standards but is able to encourage the person being led to achieve these standards. This kind of character is able to arouse high optimism and enthusiasm from the person being led.
- e. Intellectual stimulation
- f. Intellectual stimulation is the character of a transformational leader who is able to encourage the person being led to solve problems carefully and rationally. In addition, this character encourages the led person to find new, more effective ways of solving problems.
- g. Individualized consideration
- h. Individual considerations in which the character of a leader is able to understand the individual differences of the people he leads. In this case, the transformational leader is willing and able to hear the aspirations, educate, and train the person he leads.

Transformational Model Leader Traits

According to F. Luthans, the characteristics of a leader who applies a transformational leadership style include (Luthans, 2018).

- a. The leader shows himself as a tool of change, thereby bringing progress to the person he leads.
- b. The leader shows a courageous attitude, who dares to be firm and dare to take risks for any action or decision made.
- c. The leader shows trust in the person he leads, where trust will have an impact on high and positive performance.
- d. The leader upholds noble values in his life, such as the values of togetherness, high moral values, so as to influence the person being led to be able to appreciate and respect him.
- e. Leaders who are always learning and developing themselves and the people they lead, so that the people who are led are encouraged to learn also for the common good.
- f. Leaders who have an optimistic attitude in carrying out their roles and can see the opportunities and potential of the people they lead.
- g. Leaders who have the ability to deal with complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty. A leader who is always brave in the face of obstacles.

Advantages of a Transformational Leadership Model

Transformational leadership has several advantages compared to other leadership theories, namely (Hutahaean, 2021).

- a. The relationship between the leader and the person being led is harmonious and not rigid.
- b. Decisions and wisdom are taken through discussions so that the person being led will feel valued and needed a role.
- c. Develop the creative power of the person being led because they can put forward opinions and suggestions.

- d. The person being led will feel confident and comfortable so that they can bring out their best abilities to complete their tasks.
- e. The person being led will feel excited because they feel cared for.
- f. It is not easy for the opposition camp to be born because the leader and the person being led are in line

Character

Character is a distinctive-good value (knowing the value of good, willing to do good, real good living and having a good impact on the environment) that are imprinted in oneself and are embodied in behavior (Sugiyono, 2018). Character becomes a characteristic possessed by a person who distinguishes himself from others. According to W.J.S Poerwadarminta, character is the character, disposition, psychological or ethical qualities that distinguish a person from others. Character is a psychological term that refers to the distinctive traits possessed by individuals that distinguish them from other individuals (Sirait, 2020). Meanwhile, according to Suyanto and Muslich, character is a characteristic of a person in thinking and behaving in the family, society, and country (Houston-Kolnik, Todd, & Greeson, 2019; Masnur, 2021). Therefore character becomes characteristic traits inherent in a person's personality.

Character is not an innate from birth that cannot be changed anymore, but character is something that must be built and can be developed consciously through various processes (Baumgartner, 2018; Kurniawan & Agustini, 2019). The character is composed of three interconnected parts, namely (Glanz, 2020; Zubaedi, 2021).

a. Moral Knowing

Moral knowledge is an important thing to teach in shaping character. There are 6 (six) aspects that stand out as the goal of character education, namely: (1) Moral consciousness, using their thinking to see a situation that requires a moral judgment and then to think carefully about what is meant by the correct direction of action; (2) Knowledge of moral values, respect for responsibility, honesty, fairness, tolerance, respect, discipline, integrity, kindness, compassion and encouragement to define all the ways of being a good person (3) Perspective determination, is the ability to understand the point of view of others, see the situation as it is, imagine how they will think, react and feel the problem at hand (4) Moral thinking (5) Decision making (6) Personal knowledge.

b. Moral Feeling

There are six aspects that are aspects of emotions that a person must be able to feel to be a human character: (1) Conscience, having a cognitive side to know what is right and an emotional side to feel obliged to do what is right; (2) Self-esteem; (3) Empathy; (4) Loving a good thing; (5) Self-control; (6) Humility.

c. Moral Behavior

Moral action is the result of two other parts of character. Moral action consists of several aspects as follows: (1) Competence, having the ability to transform moral judgments and feelings into effective moral actions (2) Desire, the correct choice in moral situations to do what one thinks should be done (3) Habits.

Excellence

In the Big Dictionary of Indonesian (2018:152), the word "excellence" has two meanings, namely (1) as an adjective meaning "higher" (clever, good, capable, strong, durable, etc.) than others; main (best, especially), and (2) as verbs denoting "win" (Balai Pustaka Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2018). Excellence is a comparison or relative position of a person who is "more" than other humans, especially in his group.

Excellence Character

Excellence character is a combination of attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and skills that are inherent in a person and can influence a person in building a good relationship with God, oneself and those around him (Knight, Casassa, & Kagotho, 2022; Setiawan, 2019). Therefore, special attention is needed to build the character.

Transformational Leadership of Lectures in the Christian Leadership Department, Faculty of Theological Sciences, IAKN Tarutung

Transformational leadership is a leadership model that can bring about change (transformation), where to do so a leader needs to blend in and establish good relationships with the people he leads. There are four (4) characteristics of transformational leadership, namely: idealistic influence (charisma), inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Therefore through transformational leadership, a leader can change the character of the person he leads.

This study aims to reveal how the application of transformational leadership of lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department, Faculty of Theological Sciences, IAKN Tarutung and its influence in producing superior student character. From the description of the research data above, the results that can be seen are as follows.

Transformational Leadership carried out by Lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers to ten (10) student respondents and the results of observations on teaching and learning process activities between lecturers and students that take place in class, the transformational leadership that has been carried out by lecturers of the Christian Leadership Department, namely.

a. Idealistic Influence

Based on the results of interviews with ten respondents, all respondents replied that some lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department can already be a tool of change that brings progress and change to the students being taught. The progress and changes felt by students are advances in using technology, public speaking, the ability to interact (social) and changes in character.

b. Motivational Inspiration

Based on the results of interviews with ten respondents, all respondents replied that several lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department have provided motivation and inspiration both through personal life experiences and life experiences of biblical and world figures. In motivation and inspiration, the transformational leader must also give a challenge to the person being led so that the person being led has the enthusiasm to complete the challenge. Based on the results of interviews with ten respondents, all respondents replied that several lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department had already given challenges to students. There are several challenges given such as making scientific papers that can be published, preaching in front of lecturers and students at Department worship, speaking in front of the class to present assignments, processing waste on plastic, obtaining IP 4.0, reading the Bible in a day two chapters and looking for its meaning, reading books or journals two or three in a week.

c. Intellectual Stimulation

Based on the results of interviews with ten respondents, all respondents replied that some lecturers have encouraged students to be able to think creatively and innovatively, such as making research, processing waste into goods of economic value, and keeping journals.

d. Individual Considerations

Based on the results of interviews from ten respondents, seven out of ten respondents said that some lecturers have paid special attention to the development of student potential, both academic and non-academic potential.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership of Lecturers in Producing Superior Student Character

Based on the results of interviews and observations of ten respondents, researchers found that transformational leadership has been applied by several lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department, but not all components (characteristics) of transformational leadership are applied by lecturers (Simorangkir, Pakpahan, & Ariawan, 2021).

a. Idealistic Influence

The leadership of the lecturer in the classroom made seven out of ten respondents honest and reliable; nine out of ten respondents became someone trustworthy and punctual; nine out of ten respondents became someone who could fit in and was able to work with others; All respondents become someone who can accept and carry out obligations (responsible).

b. Motivational Inspiration

The leadership of lecturers in the classroom makes nine out of ten respondents people who want to continue learning and improving themselves; All respondents had confidence or respect for themselves.

c. Intellectual Stimulation

The leadership of lecturers in the classroom makes eight out of ten respondents someone who can communicate and listen effectively; all respondents became someone who could work independently and reliably; Eight out of ten respondents become a person who can solve the problem.

d. Individual Considerations

Affects the formation of student character where students are more enthusiastic about exploring the potential that exists in themselves, more diligent (enterprising) and more courageous. However, three out of seven respondents said that lecturers have not paid special attention to their potential, so some students feel less cared for.

4. CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership has been implemented by several lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department but not yet optimally. Of the four components of transformational leadership characteristics, there is 1 (one) component that has not been optimally applied, namely individual considerations. This means that some lecturers have not paid special attention to the potential development of students led in the classroom, so students feel less cared for. However, 3 (three) of the characteristic components of transformational leadership, namely idealistic influence, inspiring motivation, and intellectual stimulation have been applied by several lecturers in the Christian Leadership Department. Transformational leadership applied by lecturers is influential in building superior student character. Through the application of transformational leadership, students experience changes and have superior character, namely honest and reliable, trustworthy and punctual, able to cooperate, polite, friendly, independent, mature, diligent, optimistic, enthusiastic, brave, confident, want to continue to learn and improve themselves, help each other, love God, creative, innovative, independent and reliable, able to solve problems, communicate and hear effectively, zealous and courageous to dig and increase potential.

REFERENCES

- Balai Pustaka Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2018). *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Perum Penerbitan dan Percetakan Balai Pustaka.
- Baumgartner, E. (2018). Servants and Friends: a Biblical Theology of Leadership. *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 9(1), 106–108.
- Glanz, J. L. (2020). Exploration of Christian women's vocational ministry leadership and identity formation in evangelical churches on the west coast. *Christian Education Journal*, 17(2), 325–346.

- Houston-Kolnik, J. D., Todd, N. R., & Greeson, M. R. (2019). Overcoming the "Holy Hush": a qualitative examination of protestant christian leaders' responses to intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 63(1-2), 135-152.
- Hutahaean, W. S. (2021). *Teori Kepemimpinan*. Malang: Ahlimedia Press.
- Knight, L., Casassa, K., & Kagotho, N. (2022). Dignity and worth for all: Identifying shared values between social work and Christian faith-based groups' anti-sex trafficking discourse. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 41(2), 193-212.
- Kurniawan, W., & Agustini, A. (2019). *Pendidikan Karakter untuk Perguruan Tinggi*. Jawa Barat: LovRinz Publishing.
- Luthans, F. (2018). *Perilaku Organisasi*. Yogyakarta: ANDI.
- Masnur, M. (2021). *Pendidikan Karakter*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Moleong, L. J. (2021). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Pitaloka, A. (2020). *Untuk Apa Aku Mengenal Pendidikan?* Jakarta: Guepedia.
- Setiawan, D. E. (2019). Kelahiran Baru di dalam Kristus sebagai Titik Awal Pendidikan Karakter Unggul. *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat*, 3(2).
- Simorangkir, A. C., Pakpahan, B. A. S., & Ariawan, S. (2021). *The Role of Leadership In Improving Employee Discipline*. 5(1), 125-132. Retrieved from <http://e-journal.iakntarutung.ac.id/index.php/humaniora>
- Sinambela, M. (2021). *Kurikulum Prodi Kepemimpinan Kristen Fakultas Ilmu Teologi*.
- Sirait, R. G. (2020). *Digital Karakter Perspektif Agama dan Pendidikan*. Malang: Multimedia Edukasi.
- Stone, G. A., Russel, R. F., & Patterson. (2019). Transformational Versus Servant Leadership: A Difference in Leader Focus. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25(4), 349-361.
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sugiyono, W. (2018). *Membangun Karakter Unggul*. Yogyakarta: ANDI.
- Tambunan, F. (2018). Karakter Kepemimpinan Kristen sebagai Jawaban terhadap Krisis Kepemimpinan Masa Kini. *Illuminate: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 1(1).
- Zubaedi. (2021). *Pendidikan Karakter*. Jakarta: Kencana.

