

Transformational Leadership and Collaborative Teacher Learning: Building Readiness for Deep Learning in Primary Education

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines how transformational leadership supports teacher readiness for Deep Learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam, PM) through regular Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG) activities in a Model School in Indonesia. A qualitative single-case study was conducted at school. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the principal and a fifth-grade teacher, along with document analysis of the school's vision and mission statements, KKG invitations, attendance records, meeting minutes, and photographs. Data were analyzed through data condensation, display, and conclusion verification. The findings reveal that the principal supports teacher development by communicating a shared vision, facilitating collaborative learning, providing reflective supervision, mapping professional needs, and adapting guidance to teachers' readiness. KKG provides opportunities for experience sharing and instructional reflection, although consistent classroom implementation and student learning outcomes remain unverified. The study concludes that professional development becomes more meaningful when leadership connects shared direction, teacher participation, and practical follow-up. The findings imply that principals should strengthen collaborative planning, document instructional changes, and evaluate improvement using classroom evidence and student learning outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Quality and equitable education are fundamental to human resource development and broader societal progress. However, Indonesian students' learning outcomes continue to present substantial challenges that require

systemic attention (Laila et al., 2025; Zhan et al., 2024). The 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) recorded scores of 359 in reading, 366 in mathematics, and 383 in science, while only 25% of students met the minimum reading proficiency level (Ingram et al., 2023; Lichand et al., 2026). These results indicate that improving educational quality requires more than curriculum reform; it also demands transformations in teaching practices and educators' capacities. Deep Learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam, PM), which emphasizes mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning experiences, provides a direction for such transformation (Putri et al., 2026; Taylor, 2026). Therefore, school leadership is essential for translating educational policies into impactful learning practices.

A major challenge in educational transformation lies in the gap between policy design and schools' capacity to implement policies consistently. Innovative learning policies require teachers to develop instructional strategies that promote conceptual understanding, collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking (Adeoye et al., 2024; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). However, such changes require systematic professional support. The national guidelines for Model Schools implementing Deep Learning, Coding, and Artificial Intelligence acknowledge that educators still need technical guidance and ongoing support despite initial training (Funa & Gabay, 2025; Pratiwi et al., 2025). This challenge matters because training disconnected from classroom needs may fail to produce meaningful changes in teaching practices. Schools therefore require professional development mechanisms that are continuous, collaborative, and responsive to instructional needs. Strengthening these mechanisms is especially important to ensure educational reforms produce sustainable improvements in classroom learning (Hefniy et al., 2025; Susanti et al., 2025).

Within Model Schools implementing Deep Learning, principals have a strategic responsibility to guide instructional transformation while strengthening teachers' professional capacities (Pangestika et al., 2026; Sliwka et al., 2024). National guidelines identify educator development as an indicator of leadership excellence, ranging from incidental activities to strategic, continuous, and data-informed professional development. One relevant mechanism is an internal Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG), conducted regularly every Saturday. This forum can provide opportunities for teachers to exchange experiences, identify instructional challenges, develop solutions, and reflect on Deep Learning practices (Kallio, 2024; Levin, 2024). Nevertheless, regular meetings do not automatically guarantee improvements in teaching. Their effectiveness depends on how principals establish a shared vision, facilitate teacher participation, and follow up on the outcomes of professional reflection. Understanding these leadership practices is therefore essential.

Previous studies indicate that principals influence student learning primarily through teachers' motivation, commitment, professional capacity, and

working conditions (Abbaspour et al., 2024; Alazmi & Hammad, 2023). Robinson (2010) identified principals' direct involvement in teaching and teacher development as a particularly influential leadership practice. Transformational leadership has also been associated with improvements in teachers' motivation and professional practices (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Nasrullah, 2026), as well as a more positive school culture (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Vu et al., 2026). Meanwhile, effective professional development emphasizes active learning, collaboration, coaching, feedback, reflection, and sustained engagement (Fernandes et al., 2023; Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024). These findings establish the importance of connecting school leadership with teacher development. However, they offer limited explanation of how internal Teacher Working Groups function as a professional learning mechanism in implementing Deep Learning policies.

Research on teacher development in Indonesia highlights challenges related to institutional support, the continuity of professional learning, and the connection between development activities and classroom practice. Widiyan & Takayoshi (2024) found that principal development tends to emphasize administrative skills without fully addressing everyday instructional challenges. Munawaroh et al. (2026) identified several barriers to Teacher Working Group implementation, including limited facilities, funding constraints, teacher motivation, and insufficient support from principals and local governments. Other studies have examined transformational leadership in relation to teacher job satisfaction and teacher competence (Kaya, 2024; Yu & Jang, 2024). Although these studies provide relevant insights, they do not sufficiently explain how transformational leadership is enacted through regular internal Teacher Working Groups in Model Schools implementing Deep Learning. This gap warrants investigation because sustained professional learning is central to translating policy expectations into classroom practices.

This study addresses the identified gap by examining principals' transformational leadership in organizing Saturday Teacher Working Group meetings as a human resource development mechanism in a Model School implementing Deep Learning. Its novelty lies in integrating three elements: the relatively recent policy context of Deep Learning implementation, the transformational leadership dimensions proposed by Adams et al. (2023) alongside the national guidelines' indicators of leadership excellence, and an analysis of professional learning practices informed by the perspectives of the principal, teachers, and activity-related documents. This integration enables the study to move beyond identifying leadership behaviors toward examining their relationship with the planning, implementation, and follow-up of professional development. Accordingly, the study offers a contextual understanding of how national educational policies are translated into school-level professional learning mechanisms.

Building on this research gap, the study addresses three questions: how does the principal enact transformational leadership to establish direction and prepare teachers for Deep Learning implementation; how are Saturday Teacher Working Group meetings designed, implemented, and followed up as a human resource development strategy; and what factors support or constrain these efforts? The study argues that regular Teacher Working Group meetings can become an effective professional development mechanism when principals integrate a shared vision, role modeling, critical reflection, and support tailored to teachers' needs. Conversely, meetings without meaningful follow-up risk becoming merely administrative activities. The study therefore aims to analyze these leadership practices to advance understanding of educational leadership and provide practical recommendations for principals and school supervisors seeking to strengthen continuous teacher development.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the principal's leadership practices in developing human resources through regular Saturday Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG) meetings within the context of Deep Learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam, PM) implementation (Fantinelli et al., 2024; Lan & Zhou, 2025). The study was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 5 Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, purposively selected because it had been designated as a Model School for implementing PM, Coding, and Artificial Intelligence (KKA). This setting provided a relevant context for examining how national educational policies are translated into teacher professional development practices. The participants were the principal (KS), who reported having assumed the position in late 2025, and a fifth-grade classroom teacher (G1) with four years of teaching experience. The researchers selected both participants based on their direct involvement in KKG activities. Their identities were anonymized using codes to maintain confidentiality.

Data were collected on October 16, 2026, through semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis. The interviews used an interview guide developed from the study's analytical framework, comprising 29 main questions for the principal and 21 main questions for the teacher. Each interview lasted approximately 40–50 minutes. The questions explored who was involved in teacher professional development, what activities were conducted, when and where they took place, why particular strategies were adopted, and how the activities were planned, implemented, and followed up to support PM implementation. Documentary evidence included the school's vision and mission statements, KKG invitations and attendance lists, available meeting notes or minutes, and photographs of KKG sessions and student activities. Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), comprising

data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing relevant information. Data display involved arranging findings in thematic matrices connecting leadership dimensions, KKG practices, and documentary evidence. Conclusions were drawn and verified by examining patterns, relationships among themes, and consistency across the available evidence. Coding combined a deductive approach based on the analytical framework with an inductive approach to identify themes emerging from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data trustworthiness was established through source and method triangulation, following Lincoln and Guba (1985) (Enworo, 2023; Stahl & King, 2026). Source triangulation involved comparing information from the principal and teacher and checking its consistency with available documentary evidence. Method triangulation involved cross-checking interview findings against the collected documents. Differences between accounts were critically examined to ensure that interpretations did not rely solely on the principal's perspective. The four achievement levels in the national Model School guidelines were used to interpret leadership practices contextually rather than as a quantitative assessment instrument. To support dependability and analytical traceability, the researcher retained interview transcripts, supporting documents, and a codebook linking each theme to its corresponding data sources. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' identities, and respecting their right to withdraw from the study. The researcher's positionality and its potential influence on data collection and interpretation were also considered throughout the analytical process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Aligning the Vision and Direction of Deep Learning

Operationally, aligning the vision and direction of Deep Learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam, PM) refers to the principal's process of translating the school's vision and mission into shared understanding, leadership communication, role modeling, and student-centered instructional practices. This subfinding examines the principal's interpretation of PM, teacher involvement in understanding and implementing instructional changes, and leadership practices that encourage reflection and improvement. The analysis draws on inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation within transformational leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), as well as the national Model School guidelines (Enworo, 2023). Interview findings indicate that the principal (KS) understands PM as an approach that helps students comprehend concepts, connect knowledge to everyday life, and apply learning in real-world situations. KS emphasized that "the school's vision and mission must be visible in everyday practice, not merely written in documents."

This understanding connects the school's MULIA vision Inspiring, Excellent, Literate, Islamic, and Adaptive with instructional planning and school culture.

KS communicated the PM's direction through school meetings, Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG) sessions, and professional development forums, while involving teachers in planning and evaluation. KS also emphasized collective discussion rather than blaming teachers when instructional strategies were unsuccessful. The fifth-grade teacher (G1) recognized that meetings, briefings, and discussions communicated the school's direction toward meaningful, student-centered learning. However, G1 stressed the importance of continued dialogue and follow-up to ensure teachers remained involved. Regarding role modeling, G1 explained that "role modeling becomes visible when directions are accompanied by guidance and opportunities for teachers to try things out and then evaluate the results." The school's vision and mission documents reinforce this orientation by emphasizing the development of a MULIA school community and students' communication, collaboration, and critical-thinking skills through PM. The researcher interprets these findings as evidence of participatory leadership, although institutional documents alone cannot confirm consistent classroom implementation.

Overall, the principal pattern is vision alignment through participatory communication and learning-oriented role modeling. Three interrelated elements characterize this pattern. First, the principal establishes instructional direction by connecting PM with the school's vision and mission. Second, communication through meetings, KKG sessions, and professional development forums builds shared understanding and gives teachers opportunities to share their perspectives. Third, role modeling involves guiding teachers, encouraging reflection, and supporting experimentation with instructional strategies. These practices correspond to inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation in transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The comparison between KS and G1 indicates that the principal emphasizes communicating the vision and involving teachers, whereas the teacher highlights practical guidance and sustained follow-up. The researcher concludes that vision alignment extends beyond communicating institutional goals; it requires professional support that enables teachers to translate shared understanding into instructional practice. Further classroom observations and follow-up documentation are needed to establish consistent implementation.

Saturday Teacher Working Group (KKG) as a Collaborative Learning Space

Operationally, the Saturday Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG) is a scheduled, ongoing mechanism for teacher professional development aimed at building a shared understanding of Deep Learning (PM), exchanging teaching experiences, addressing instructional challenges, and planning classroom improvements. Interview findings indicate that the principal

(KS) organizes KKG as a shared learning space to strengthen teacher competence, collaboration, and reflection. KS emphasized that "teachers need a space to discuss, share experiences, address instructional problems, and plan improvements." KS planned activities based on supervision findings, teacher reflections, student needs, and learning evaluations. KS facilitates discussions, group work, practice sharing, and instructional material development. The Grade 5 teacher (G1) considered KKG helpful in ensuring that teachers "do not feel they are working alone," particularly when concrete teaching examples are discussed. However, G1 expected relevant, participatory agendas rather than one-way presentations.

Documentary evidence indicates that KKG was scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Central Indonesian Time (WITA), while an attendance sheet dated October 3, 2026, listed approximately fifty teachers and staff. The invitation also asked teachers to bring textbooks to support text-based learning. G1's meeting notes documented discussions on STEM, project-based learning, problem-solving, inquiry, exploration, a solar-powered car design, facility constraints, and alternative simple projects developed through teacher collaboration. The note "Reflection Day 4" also indicated the documentation of reflective activities. The researcher interprets this evidence as indicating that KKG has an organized schedule and learning materials related to instructional needs. KS explained that post-lesson reflection, peer discussions, and supervision inform subsequent KKG agendas. G1 emphasized evaluating learning objectives, student engagement, and learning difficulties. Nevertheless, the available documents do not establish consistent follow-up implementation in classrooms.

Overall, the findings indicate that KKG functions as a structured, relevant, and reflection-oriented collaborative learning space. This pattern comprises three main characteristics. First, regular meetings provide teachers with continuous opportunities to develop their professional competence collectively. Second, discussions of practical problems, experience sharing, and group work create opportunities to develop instructional strategies that address students' needs. Third, reflection can connect professional learning with classroom improvement by identifying challenges and planning follow-up actions. The principal plays a central role in connecting these characteristics through needs-based planning and discussion facilitation. Meanwhile, G1's perspective highlights the importance of relevant agendas and meaningful teacher involvement. The researcher concludes that KKG effectiveness cannot be assessed solely through meeting schedules, attendance records, or discussion topics. It also requires evidence of meaningful participation, follow-up to reflective activities, and the implementation of instructional strategies developed through the meetings.

Supervision, Feedback, and Teacher Development According to Readiness

Operationally, supervision, feedback, and readiness-based teacher development refer to professional support processes through which the principal identifies competency needs, provides evidence-based feedback, and determines appropriate development strategies. Interviews with the principal (KS) indicated that supervision involves reviewing lesson plans, observing classrooms, engaging in teacher dialogue, and examining student learning outcomes. KS allows teachers to reflect before discussing observations and agreeing on one or two improvement priorities. According to KS, teachers should "not feel that they are merely being assessed, but also supported in their development." The researcher interprets this approach as dialogic supervision that positions teachers as partners in continuous instructional improvement rather than merely recipients of evaluation.

The Grade 5 teacher (G1) considered supervision beneficial when conducted "as professional guidance, not merely administrative inspection." G1 emphasized that useful feedback should be clear, practical, dialogic, and attentive to student responses and learning outcomes. Guidance was also considered more relevant when connected to classroom needs, such as facilitating discussions or improving instructional materials. The researcher interprets this perspective as emphasizing feedback's practical value for teaching. However, G1 primarily described the characteristics of effective supervision rather than recounting a specific supervisory event. The available data also lack direct observation notes and follow-up documentation to verify consistent implementation.

Overall, the findings indicate a pattern of dialogic supervision oriented toward teachers' needs and readiness. This pattern comprises identifying needs through learning evidence, providing feedback through reflection and dialogue, and adapting support to individual readiness. KS emphasized using supervision to determine development priorities, whereas G1 highlighted practical guidance and nonjudgmental communication. Both perspectives share a professional development orientation. Nevertheless, additional evidence is needed to establish consistent implementation. Classroom observation records, supervision instruments, written feedback, and follow-up documentation are needed to verify whether the identified mechanisms are systematically implemented.

Reflection as a Link Between KKG and Classroom Learning

Operationally, reflection refers to reviewing teaching experiences to identify successes, difficulties, student responses, and next steps for improvement. Interviews with KS indicated that reflection occurs after lessons, through peer discussions, during Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG) sessions, and in professional development meetings. KS emphasized that "reflecting on teaching does not mean looking for shortcomings, but

identifying opportunities to improve." Teachers are encouraged to examine what worked well, what needs improvement, how students responded, and what should change. Reflection outcomes inform instructional adjustments and subsequent KKG agendas. The researcher interprets this practice as an effort to connect classroom experiences with professional learning.

G1 explained that reflection should consider learning objective attainment, student engagement, and difficult-to-understand content. According to G1, reflection should improve subsequent lessons rather than merely produce written notes. The researcher interprets this perspective as emphasizing reflection's practical function. Available documents include KKG minutes discussing STEM, project-based learning, problem-solving, inquiry, and exploration, as well as a note titled "Reflection Day 4." These materials indicate reflective activities but do not clearly link reflection to improvement decisions and classroom implementation. Therefore, the documents support the existence of reflective activities rather than demonstrating the effectiveness of subsequent actions.

The main pattern is reflection as a link between KKG and instructional improvement. This pattern comprises evaluating teaching experiences, identifying improvement needs, and using reflection outcomes to plan instructional strategies or subsequent KKG agendas. KS emphasized reflection's relationship with professional development planning, whereas G1 highlighted improving learning through student-related evidence. Both perspectives indicate an orientation toward continuous professional learning. However, the available evidence does not establish whether recommendations from reflection are consistently implemented and evaluated at subsequent meetings. To assess the continuity of this reflective cycle, observation notes, instructional materials, and follow-up documentation are needed.

Needs Mapping and Resource Utilization

Operationally, needs mapping and resource utilization refer to identifying teachers' competency needs and connecting them with available support to strengthen Deep Learning (PM). Interviews with KS indicated that teacher needs are identified through supervision, instructional materials, student assessments, reflection, and KKG discussions. These needs include lesson planning, developing prompting questions, formative assessment, and promoting critical thinking. KS also identified scheduled time, facilities, teaching materials, digital tools, teachers, and external resource persons as supporting resources. The researcher interprets this approach as an effort to connect actual instructional challenges with professional development planning.

G1 emphasized the need for collaborative learning time, access to resource persons and learning materials, adequate facilities, and opportunities to exchange experiences with colleagues. According to G1, KKG can address these

needs when discussions relate directly to classroom challenges and are followed by practical action. The researcher interprets this perspective as emphasizing accessibility and practical usefulness. Available invitations and KKG minutes demonstrate scheduled professional activities involving contextual learning topics. However, these documents do not establish whether every identified need has been prioritized or supported by appropriate resources. Observation records, needs-mapping documents, and activity plans are needed to verify implementation more comprehensively.

The main pattern is needs mapping as the basis for relevant resource utilization. This pattern involves identifying needs through supervision and reflection, selecting appropriate support, and using resources to improve instruction. KS emphasized needs identification and support coordination, whereas G1 highlighted accessibility and practical benefits. Both perspectives suggest that professional development requires a clear connection between teachers' needs and available resources. Providing facilities or training alone does not guarantee changes in teaching practice. Therefore, the effectiveness of this approach requires further examination through planning documents, evidence of resource utilization, and records of follow-up activities after KKG sessions.

Reported Changes in Practice and Outcomes

Operationally, changes in practice and reported outcomes refer to shifts in teaching strategies teachers perceived or the principal expected following KKG, supervision, and reflection activities. Interviews with KS indicated expectations that teachers would design instruction around student needs, expand discussion opportunities, encourage questioning, assess reasoning rather than answers alone, and strengthen collaboration. KS illustrated this orientation through economic learning activities involving environmental observation, interviews with local business owners, and presentations of findings. KS also identified activity regularity, implementation, supervision effectiveness, and evidence of impact as indicators of school development. The researcher interprets these statements as criteria for expected change rather than evidence that all changes have been achieved.

G1 reported efforts to incorporate discussions, prompting questions, and contextual assignments while paying greater attention to students' learning experiences. G1 hoped that students would become more active, express opinions confidently, and explain their understanding in their own words. However, G1 emphasized, "I do not want to conclude that learning has been successful based only on general impressions." A photograph shows students collaboratively constructing a simple water filter, and KKG minutes discuss STEM support activities consistent with contextual learning. Nevertheless, the informant did not directly connect the photograph to a specific KKG follow-up.

Measured learning outcomes and systematic classroom observations are also unavailable, so student impact cannot yet be established.

The main pattern is gradual reported changes in teaching practice, while student outcomes remain to be verified. This pattern includes greater attention to student needs, efforts to incorporate discussions and contextual assignments, and recognition of the importance of evidence-based evaluation. KS emphasized expected changes, whereas G1 described strategies being introduced into classroom practice. Their alignment suggests an emerging shift in instructional orientation but does not establish a causal relationship between KKG and student learning outcomes. Further assessment requires lesson plans, classroom observations, student work, and systematically comparable assessment data.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Operationally, supporting and inhibiting factors refer to internal and external conditions affecting KKG implementation, teacher participation, application of professional learning, and sustained instructional improvement. Interviews with KS identified shared commitment, teacher openness, regular scheduling, communication, mutual respect, and institutional support as supporting factors. KS stressed that "teachers must feel comfortable expressing their difficulties without fearing that they will be considered incapable." Inhibiting factors include differences in understanding, experience, and readiness, as well as the risk that KKG outcomes remain limited to discussion or lesson planning. Responses include open communication, gradual mentoring, practical examples, ongoing monitoring, and opportunities for experienced teachers to share practices.

G1 identified collaborative learning, openness to questions, principal support, and a nonjudgmental discussion environment as supporting factors. Barriers included time constraints, limited facilities, and the need to adapt strategies to students' diverse abilities. G1 explained that "sometimes a good idea needs to be adjusted to the available facilities or time allocation." To address these constraints, G1 selects one or two feasible strategies to try and discusses them with colleagues. The researcher interprets this approach as adaptation to practical limitations. However, the available evidence primarily consists of interview accounts; direct observations of discussion dynamics and the effects of these constraints are unavailable, so the reported experiences cannot be independently verified.

The main pattern is collaborative support that must be balanced with adaptation to implementation constraints. Supporting factors include open leadership, willingness to learn, opportunities for sharing, regular scheduling, and institutional support. Barriers include differences in readiness, limited time and facilities, and uncertainty about follow-up implementation. KS emphasized gradual mentoring and monitoring, whereas G1 recommended clear agendas,

practical activities, and manageable follow-up actions. KS also acknowledged the need to map teachers' needs earlier and ensure that every KKG session has clear objectives and follow-up. The researcher concludes that adaptive management is necessary, although the effectiveness of these strategies still requires verification through implementation records and follow-up documentation.

Table 4. Summary of Research Themes by Data Source

Theme	Principal (KS)	Teacher (G1)	Documents
Direction and shared ownership (3.1.1–3.1.2)	Explains the rationale for change; involves teachers; evaluates unsuccessful efforts collaboratively.	Communicates direction through meetings and discussions; expects discussion opportunities and follow-up to be maintained.	The third mission statement includes Deep Learning.
Role modeling and communication	Uses open communication, prompting questions, and reflection.	Encouragement is accompanied by mentoring and opportunities to try new practices.	—
KKG as a collaborative learning space	Conducted regularly and continuously; themes address actual needs and include follow-up actions.	Provides opportunities to share experiences and avoid working in isolation; expects teachers to contribute to topic selection.	Invitations, attendance records, and minutes documenting STEM topics.
Differentiated supervision and professional development (3.1.3)	Provides professional guidance, evidence-based feedback, and support tailored to teachers' readiness.	Views supervision as professional guidance rather than administrative inspection; expects clear and dialogic feedback.	—
Reflection (3.1.4)	Uses reflection to improve teaching and determine KKG topics.	Uses reflection to improve subsequent instructional practices.	Notes entitled "Reflection Day 4."
Needs mapping and resource utilization (3.2.1–3.2.2)	Identifies needs through supervision, instructional materials, assessments, reflection, and KKG; engages external resource persons when needed.	Needs time, resource persons, facilities, and opportunities for experience sharing.	—
Implementation barriers	Differences in teacher readiness and challenges in classroom implementation.	Saturday scheduling constraints, diverse student needs, and challenges in classroom implementation.	Meeting minutes identify needs for facilities and teaching aids.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the principal's leadership in developing teachers' readiness to implement Deep Learning (PM) reflects the four dimensions of transformational leadership: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence (Putri et al., 2026; Taylor, 2026). These dimensions are reflected in communicating the rationale for change, using prompting questions, providing needs-based supervision, and maintaining open communication. This pattern aligns with Sun & Leithwood (2015), who identify setting direction, developing people, and redesigning organizational conditions as central domains of transformational school leadership. However, the empirical support for these dimensions remains uneven because most evidence comes from the principal's account, while teacher confirmation is limited. The findings therefore show how transformational leadership theory translates into practice while highlighting the importance of triangulation to strengthen interpretations.

The Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru, KKG) functions as a professional development mechanism through collaborative learning, discussion of instructional needs, and reflection on teaching practices. Invitations, attendance records, and meeting minutes document structured activities addressing STEM and project-based learning. These characteristics align with effective professional development frameworks emphasizing content focus, active learning, collective participation, and reflection (Dogan et al., 2025; Lestari et al., 2026). The teacher's statement that KKG reduces the feeling of working alone also corresponds with the literature on professional learning communities (Qu et al., 2025; Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025). Nevertheless, the continuity of these activities and the transfer of learning into classroom practice remain insufficiently verified. This study therefore distinguishes the existence of collaborative activities from evidence of their effectiveness.

Another finding concerns the gap between professional development planning and teachers' experiences of participating in KKG agenda-setting. The principal explained that topics should ideally emerge from supervision, reflection, and actual instructional needs, whereas the teacher expressed a desire for greater involvement in proposing topics. This difference extends discussions of professional learning communities by suggesting that collaboration should be assessed not only through attendance and discussion but also through participation in decision-making. Furthermore, supervision and coaching may support changes in teaching practices, as Kraft et al. (2024) discuss, although this relationship cannot be established without documented follow-up. Unlike reports emphasizing low teacher motivation and insufficient leadership support in cluster-level KKG activities (Rasmitadila et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2023), the present findings highlight scheduling constraints, limited facilities, and challenges in implementing strategies in classrooms.

Theoretically, this study contributes by connecting transformational leadership, collaborative professional development, and Model School indicators within a single interpretive framework in a private primary school context. The findings suggest that leadership involves more than communicating a vision; it also entails organizing professional learning opportunities, providing feedback, and establishing conditions that enable reflection (Arifin et al., 2025; Mulyadi et al., 2025; Suratman & Sugiyono, 2025). This contribution complements research emphasizing the importance of principals' involvement in teaching and teacher development (Elihami & Melbourne, 2023; Indriani et al., 2023). It supports the view that transformational and instructional leadership can operate together (Brown et al., 2024; Zafar & Akram, 2025). However, because the study focuses on one school and relies on informant accounts and limited documentary evidence, its contribution is context-specific rather than universally generalizable. The findings also do not establish causal relationships between leadership practices and changes in teaching or student outcomes.

Practically, principals should use supervision records, assessments, and teacher reflections to determine KKG topics while establishing explicit mechanisms for teachers to propose instructional needs. Each meeting should produce one or two feasible strategies for classroom implementation, which can subsequently be reviewed through professional discussions, lesson-plan reviews, and classroom observations. Schools should also document changes in teaching practices, students' responses, and learning outcomes so improvement is not assessed solely through perceptions. This recommendation aligns with Guskey & Link (2019), who emphasizes the importance of student learning evidence in understanding changes in teacher development. Because the principal has been in the position for a relatively short period and documentation of impact remains limited, any assessment of the school's Model School development stage should be considered provisional. Further research involving more teachers and repeated observations could examine the sustainability of these practices.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that teachers' readiness for Deep Learning (PM) develops not merely through communicating a vision, but through integrating transformational leadership, collaborative teacher learning, reflective supervision, and readiness-based mentoring. The central lesson is that KKG becomes meaningful when professional discussions address actual classroom needs, involve teachers in setting priorities, and lead to practical follow-up. The study contributes to educational leadership scholarship by linking transformational leadership theory to national Model School indicators and showing how leadership practices can support teacher development in a school-specific context. Practically, the findings suggest that principals should

strengthen teacher participation in KKG planning, document classroom implementation, and evaluate instructional changes using student work and learning evidence. However, the study is limited by its two informants, reliance on self-reported accounts, limited KKG documentation, absence of direct classroom observations, and lack of measured student outcomes. Future research should involve more diverse stakeholders, conduct classroom and KKG observations, examine changes in teaching and student learning, and follow implementation across a full semester.

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