

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Fostering Community - Based Innovation for the Transformation of Residential Areas into the Jelita (Jepang Bali Kita) Village Tourism

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ABSTRACT

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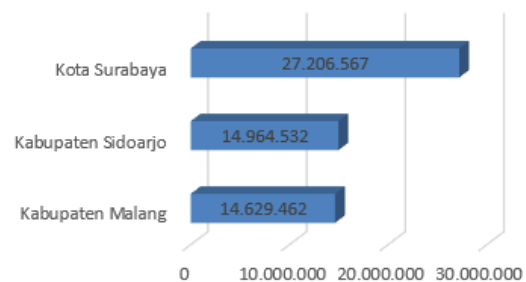
This study examines transformational leadership's role in fostering community-based innovation to transform a residential area into the Jelita Tourism Village in Surabaya City. A qualitative research approach was employed, using a case study method. The research focuses on how community leaders demonstrate transformational leadership in initiating and sustaining the development of a tourism area based on citizen participation. The theoretical framework is based on the four dimensions of transformational leadership proposed by Bass & Riggio (2008): idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The findings reveal that the community leaders effectively implemented all four dimensions. Their ability to build a shared vision, encourage innovation, foster trust, and attend to both individual and group needs significantly contributed to increased community participation and the creation of innovations throughout the development process. This leadership style has proven to be a key factor in transforming the residential area into a sustainable, competitive, and culturally rooted tourism destination. The study underscores the importance of transformational leadership in community-based development and provides implications for similar communities in other regions.

INTRODUCTION

Surabaya, the capital city of East Java Province, plays a crucial role in the development of tourism in the region, which holds great potential as a major tourist destination, as evidenced by the significant growth in tourist arrivals. Tourism development can substantially support the economy through increased activity in trade and services (Agustin, 2021). The rise in the number of visitors reflects Surabaya's strategic role as a hub of economic, cultural, and transportation activities in eastern Indonesia. In addition to serving as the main gateway to various tourist destinations in East Java, Surabaya has transformed into a primary destination in itself, contributing significantly to

enhancing tourism competitiveness at both regional and national levels.

Table 1.1 The number of domestic tourist trips by destination city/regency in East Java, highlighting Surabaya's prominence in attracting travelers across the province.



Source : Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Timur, 2024

. The city of Surabaya possesses considerable potential in the tourism sector and continues to innovate through the introduction of new tourism concepts, one of which is the development of thematic villages. Thematic villages in Surabaya are community-driven initiatives developed by and for residents, each carrying a distinct theme that reflects local potential, culture, history, and community creativity. In this context, the development of a thematic tourism village emerged through the initiative of a community leader in RT 05 RW 01, Banjar Sugihan Subdistrict, Tandes District, Surabaya City, who introduced the idea of Jelita (Jepang Bali Kita) Village Tourism.

Jelita Village Tourism began development in November 2023, after the COVID-19 pandemic. After nearly a year of community-based development, the village was officially inaugurated by the Surabaya City Government on September 12, 2024. This tourism village originated from the environmental awareness of a community leader who noticed an unused plot of land adjacent to the neighborhood hall (balai RT). The area had been used by residents as an informal dumping ground, which led to several issues, including a decline in environmental aesthetics and unpleasant odors that disturbed the comfort of nearby residents. In response to this situation, the community leader in RT 05 took the initiative to introduce an innovation by transforming the vacant land previously a site for waste disposal into a productive and beneficial area for the local community.

During the development process, budget constraints posed a significant barrier to innovation. In response, a local community leader initiated the idea of utilizing recycled materials to reduce waste and enhance the environmental value of the area. This environmentally conscious approach to developing the tourism village attracted the attention of local residents and encouraged participation in the "Surabaya Hebat" village competition, which involved 1,360 neighborhood associations (RW) across Surabaya. As a result, Jelita Village was selected to represent its RW and was awarded third place in the competition (Hijau, 2023). The success and achievements of this tourism village cannot be separated from the transformational leadership demonstrated by the community leader. As the head of the mobilization team, the leader played a crucial role in the development and advancement of the village,

successfully transforming the environment into a vibrant and functional tourism area.

Previous studies on transformational leadership, such as the work by Doli et al., (2024), titled "*Transformasi Kepemimpinan Kepala Desa Dalam Mengakselerasi Pembangunan Desa*", concluded that the transformational leadership of village heads successfully increased the *Indeks Desa Membangun* (IDM). The study also found that village heads encouraged active participation in development and implemented policies aligned with community needs. Thus, transformational leadership was proven effective in achieving sustainable development goals in rural settings. Similarly, the study by Fitriati & Marsanty (2023), "*Transformational Leadership in Times of Crisis: A Study of Handling COVID-19 in Bumi Raja-Raja*", demonstrated that the transformational leadership of village heads, referred to as *Bapa Raja*, played a crucial role in halting the spread of COVID-19 in the Maluku region. Another study by Abidin & Hidayat (2021), titled "*Kepemimpinan Transformasional Parabela dalam Pengembangan Pariwisata di Kabupaten Buton*", found that the leadership style of the *Parabela* could be categorized as transformational leadership. The *Parabela* demonstrated characteristics such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This leadership approach was instrumental in facilitating communication between the community and the government, preserving local customs and traditions, and simultaneously developing tourism potential.

Based on the previous literature, this study differs in two main aspects: the research focus and methodology. Most prior studies examined individuals who held formal governmental positions, particularly in village-level administrations. These studies generally emphasized the village head's role in enhancing bureaucratic performance and resolving rural development issues. Additionally, most employed descriptive or phenomenological research methods. In contrast, the present study adopts a different perspective by focusing on the leadership of non-governmental community figures in promoting public participation in the development of urban tourism villages. Furthermore, this research utilizes a case study approach to explore the phenomenon in depth.

Based on this background, the researcher is particularly interested in examining the transformational leadership of the community leader, who successfully converted an urban residential area into a tourism destination aimed at improving local economic conditions. This study seeks to explore the transformational leadership practices applied in Jelita Village Tourism, a topic which, to date, has not been previously researched.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as an effective leadership model across various organizational contexts, including international settings. According to Suriagiri (2020), this model emphasizes the quality of leader–follower relationships, which are built upon communication, mutual respect, trust, attentiveness, and a willingness to take risks. Transformational leaders are characterized by their attentiveness to the needs and motivations of their followers and their commitment to helping individuals realize their full potential (Northouse, 2016). Bass & Riggio (2008) identify four core components of transformational leadership: (1) *Idealized Influence*, in which leaders serve as role models who are admired, respected, and trusted; (2) *Inspirational Motivation*, where leaders articulate a compelling vision that inspires and motivates others; (3) *Intellectual Stimulation*, through which leaders encourage creativity and innovation by challenging existing assumptions; and (4) *Individualized Consideration*, where leaders provide personal support and guidance to foster individual development.

Community Participation

Community participation is a critical element in the success of development initiatives, particularly those rooted in local contexts. Adisasmitha (2018) defines community participation as the genuine and constructive involvement of community members in the planning and execution of development efforts in their respective areas. Similarly, Mikkelsen, as cited in Adi (2013), positions participation as a central theme in long-standing debates over the theoretical foundations and practical applications of participatory development. These approaches highlight the role of both government and non-governmental actors in

enabling inclusive, bottom-up development strategies that reflect the aspirations and capabilities of local communities.

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is qualitative research using a case study approach. The focus of the research is centered on issues related to transformational leadership as demonstrated by a community leader in Jelita Village Tourism. The analysis is guided by the transformational leadership theory developed by Bass & Riggio (2008), which comprises four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. A descriptive technique was used to analyze the data, following the model developed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman (2014), which consists of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

RESULT

Description of Jelita Village Tourism

Jelita (Jepang Bali Kita) Village Tourism is one of the thematic tourism villages that combines elements of international and Indonesian cultures, specifically those of Japan and Bali. The village is located at Jl. Manukan Lor IV I No. 51, Banjar Sugihan, Tandés District, Surabaya City.

Figure 1.1 Jelita Village Tourism



As depicted in the figure, the left side represents the Japanese-themed section and the right side features the Balinese-themed section both serving as designated photo spots within Kampung Jelita. The development of Kampung Jelita was carried out in phases, beginning with the ideation stage in 2019, followed by the realization and physical development in late 2022 through 2023. In September 2024, the Surabaya City Government officially launched the

“Wethan Wonderland,” within which Kampung Jelita is situated and acts as one of its key initiators.

This initiative was driven by a local community figure who demonstrated transformational leadership to improve the residents’ welfare and support their recovery from economic hardship, in line with the vision and mission he had previously outlined. The figure in question is Bli Komang, a resident who was appointed as the head of Kampung Jelita’s tourism committee and entrusted by the local community to serve as Vice Head of Neighborhood Unit RT 05 RW 01 in Banjar Sugihan Subdistrict, Surabaya.

Idealized Influence

In the context of transformational leadership, idealized influence reflects a leader’s capacity to act as a role model who inspires admiration, respect, and trust. This was clearly demonstrated in the leadership approach of Bli Komang, as recounted by community members in RT 05 RW 01. One participant, Mr. B, shared his perspective during an informal conversation:

“During our casual coffee gatherings, Bli Komang never forced his ideas on us. Instead, he consistently asked for our input and considered our opinions. This made us feel that his actions were genuinely intended for the benefit of the entire community, not for personal gain. Because of this, we trusted him to lead the transformation of our neighborhood into a tourism village.”

This trust was further reinforced by Bli Komang’s willingness to lead by example. Rather than delegating tasks from a distance, he initiated the groundwork himself. Mr. B continued:

“Bli Komang started building the tourism village on his own by working directly on the field. We could already see the results beginning to take shape. Even though we weren’t specifically instructed to do anything, I thought, if he’s already doing this much, then we should follow his lead and contribute as well.”

Through these narratives, it becomes evident that Bli Komang’s leadership fostered a sense of shared responsibility and inspired voluntary participation. Key indicators of idealized influence in a community-driven development setting.

Inspirational Motivation

A transformational leader provides inspiration to followers, fostering enthusiasm to improve performance and motivation to act upon internal

drives, ultimately leading to more optimal outcomes for collective goals—in this case, the development of a tourism village. The inspirational influence of Bli Komang’s leadership is reflected in a community member’s account:

“It all started when people were inspired by the Japanese-themed ornaments created by Bli Komang. Then, the community began helping each other, and thankfully, the village went on to win third place in the ‘Kampung Surabaya Hebat’ competition held by the Surabaya City Government in September 2023.”

To ensure the vision materialized, Bli Komang introduced deadlines for the completion of thematic photo spots in the tourism village. As Mr. A noted:

“We were given a deadline by Bli Komang, so that the Japanese and Balinese photo spots could be completed quickly. Without a deadline, the team might not take the work seriously, and the results wouldn’t be as good. Deadlines really helped ensure quality and commitment.”

Intellectual Stimulation

Transformational leadership also involves encouraging innovation and creativity among team members by enabling them to view challenges from multiple perspectives. In the context of Kampung Jelita, this was facilitated through regular discussions and meetings that encouraged active community involvement in uncovering and utilizing untapped local potential. This participatory process revealed several key community assets that had not previously been fully recognized or utilized.

Table 1.2 Potential identified in Jelita Village

No	Categories of Potential	Description of Potential	Examples of Utilization
1	Economy	Many residents engage in catering businesses and work in the food and beverage sector	In addition to selling from home while awaiting orders, residents can also sell their products directly at the UKM located in Kampung Wisata Jelita
2	Entrepreneurship	Numerous community members possess skills in crafting handmade	The production of souvenirs sold at Kampung Wisata Jelita, as well as planting

		products, repurposing waste materials into functional goods, and members of the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) contribute to food security efforts	lettuce in greenhouses as a form of food security, is carried out by members of the Family Welfare Movement (PKK)
3	Environmental	There is unused public land owned by the neighborhood association (RT) that residents have used as a dumping site, presents an opportunity to be transformed into a tourism area.	Jelita Village Tourism was established to improve the local economy and reduce plastic waste by recycling it into valuable and functional products

In addition to conducting meetings and evaluations with local residents, the management team of Jelita Village also holds regular discussions to ensure the continued attractiveness and visitor engagement of the tourism village. They evaluate the development and management of the area by referring to feedback and suggestions submitted by visitors through the guest book

Individualized Consideration

This approach, grounded in an organizational structure, aims to optimize the responsibility and productivity of each member by assigning roles that align with their respective competencies following the principle of "the right person in the right place." This is illustrated by the statement of Mr. K, a community leader in Kampung Jelita:

"In managing Kampung Jelita, I assign each member based on their area of expertise, in accordance with the principle of 'the right man on the right place.' However, mutual support among team members is always possible. As the chairperson, my contribution is mostly in the form of ideas, and I also serve as a tour guide when guests make reservations,

as I have a background in tourism and entertainment. Even though someone has been assigned to public relations, I still contribute when needed. For photography and videography, I rely entirely on the IT team, and I place other committee members in positions that match their specific skills."

This narrative highlights how individualized consideration is implemented by recognizing and utilizing each member's unique background and strengths to support the collaborative development of the tourism village

DISCUSSION

Idealized Influence

The research findings indicate that the idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership is strongly reflected in Bli Komang as the central figure in the development of Jelita Village. Community trust grew alongside the leader's ability to remain open to residents' input and demonstrate inclusive leadership, as evidenced by his attitude of not imposing personal will. This fostered a positive perception among the community that the leadership was carried out for collective interests rather than individual gain (Azmy, 2021). Furthermore, Bli Komang also served as an inspiring role model, as seen in his direct involvement in the initial stages of the tourism village development, which subsequently encouraged voluntary participation from the community.

Inspirational Motivation

The leader successfully ignited the community's enthusiasm through exemplary creation of distinctive ornaments, which triggered collaborative efforts among residents, leading the village to achieve third place in the Kampung Surabaya Hebat competition. Besides inspiring, the leader also set clear deadlines for the implementation of village development activities, aimed at maintaining focus, quality, and the seriousness of the management team. This reflects an achievement-oriented leadership practice, characterized by setting high standards and encouraging followers to perform at their best (Northouse, 2016). Thus, the combination of inspiration and structure in leadership effectively promotes active community involvement in realizing a shared vision for the optimal development of the tourism village.

Intellectual Stimulation

Leadership plays a strategic role in facilitating the emergence of ideas and creativity within the community, particularly in identifying and developing local potential that has not been optimally utilized (Yukl, 2010). Through active community involvement in discussion forums and evaluations, the leader of Jelita Village has successfully uncovered local assets and conducted periodic evaluations based on feedback from visitors recorded in the guest book. This reflects the application of feedback-based leadership principles, which strengthen decision-making processes grounded in actual community needs.

Individualized Consideration

The leadership approach based on appropriate role placement, or the “right man on the right place,” has proven effective in enhancing both productivity and individual responsibility within Jelita Village organizational structure. This strategy emphasizes the importance of aligning members' competencies with their assigned responsibilities to ensure team efficiency and effectiveness. The role placement based on individual expertise contributes significantly to organizational performance by reducing the gap between employee capability and job demands. Furthermore, the competency-based management theory supports the notion that leaders who recognize and leverage the unique strengths of their members are more likely to achieve collective goals (Sanghi, 2016).

The Impact of Transformational Leadership on the Local Community Through Tourism Village Development

The application of transformational leadership by a community leader in the development of Kampung Wisata Jelita has brought tangible benefits to both the environment and local residents. Previously neglected vacant land, used as an informal dumping site, was transformed into a clean, productive, and economically valuable tourism area. This change improved environmental quality, created new business opportunities, and encouraged active community participation in development efforts. The community leader inspired and motivated residents while promoting innovation, such as utilizing recycled materials, and involved them in decision-making processes. Beyond economic and social impacts, the tourism village also helped preserve local culture by

integrating traditional practices into the tourism experience. Unlike prior studies focusing on formal village heads as leaders, this research highlights how non-official community figures can play a pivotal role in driving social change. The success of Kampung Wisata Jelita demonstrates that transformational leadership rooted in community engagement is effective for sustainable development, especially in urban areas facing land and resource limitations. This case exemplifies how inclusive and participatory leadership can empower communities, improve livelihoods, and foster comprehensive quality of life improvements.

CONCLUSION

Based on the four dimensions of transformational leadership idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration it has been demonstrated that these elements function optimally and contribute significantly to the success of innovation in transforming residential areas into Jelita Village Tourism. This leadership approach has played a strategic role in mobilizing community engagement. Through exemplary conduct, competency-based task delegation, inspirational leadership, and active citizen participation in decision-making processes, an adaptive and collaborative leadership ecosystem has emerged. Thus, the application of transformational leadership serves as a key factor in the successful development of tourism villages grounded in local potential and the spirit of communal cooperation. The researcher recommends that other communities seeking to develop their areas into tourism villages based on local potential consider adopting a transformational leadership model. This approach has proven effective in driving social change and development innovation, which in turn enhances community empowerment. As a result, a collaborative work ecosystem is established fostering cross-sector partnerships among residents, government, and the private sector that is essential for the sustainable development of tourism destinations.

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