

Dual Drivers of Excellence: How Principal's Leadership and Motivation Shape Teachers' Performance

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Abstract: This study examines (1) the influence of principal leadership, (2) principal work motivation, and (3) their combined effect on high school teacher performance in Babat Toman District. A quantitative approach was employed, collecting data via questionnaires from all 76 high school teachers in the district (proportional random sampling). Data were analyzed using SPSS, including normality, linearity, and homogeneity tests, followed by multiple linear regression (t-test, F-test, and r^2 analysis). The study revealed: (1) Principal leadership significantly improves teacher performance ($t=36.886$, $p=0.02$); (2) Work motivation similarly enhances performance ($t=26.703$, $p=0.017$); and (3) Both factors jointly exert a strong influence ($F=672.870 > F\text{-table}=3.120$), explaining a substantial variance in outcomes. This research uniquely quantifies the dual impact of leadership and motivation on teacher performance in a rural Indonesian context, providing empirical validation of their synergistic relationship. Schools should prioritize leadership training and motivational programs for principals, as their decisions and approaches directly shape teacher effectiveness. The study offers a replicable model for evaluating leadership-motivation dynamics in education, serving as a benchmark for policymakers and administrators aiming to optimize teacher performance through principal development.

Keywords: Principal's Leadership, Principal's Work Motivation, Teachers' Performance

A. Introduction

In Indonesia, efforts to improve the quality of education are inseparable from the crucial role of principals and teachers in the teaching and learning process. As school leaders, principals have a significant responsibility in guiding and motivating teachers to achieve established educational goals (Yalçinkaya et al., 2021). This research introduces a new model or approach that will be implemented by comprehensively examining how two important factors—principal's leadership and teacher's motivation—interact to improve school performance. In high schools throughout Babat Toman District, teacher's performance in several high schools still faces challenges. Based on preliminary observations by the researcher, there are indications

that low teacher's motivation and ineffective principal's leadership styles are contributing factors to this. Leadership in English is defined as "leadership." However, specifically, leadership in this research can be defined as a close relationship between an individual and a group (Basirun & Turimah, 2022). Meanwhile, according to Fitzsimmons & Callan (2020), leadership is a crucial force behind the power of various organizations. To create an effective organization, the scope of work determines what they can achieve. In this regard, leaders are the key to success for an organization, especially in education, namely the school principal. According to Kadarsih et al. (2020), the school principal is the number one key to educational success in schools. Therefore, the principal must play an active role in ensuring the school's success. The principal must prepare various strategies to develop a curriculum that meets the school's needs and also create a conducive atmosphere to foster enthusiasm and develop student learning motivation (Ariyani et al., 2021; Ideswal et al., 2020; Sari & Lestari, 2025). Research by Johanes et al. (2022) explains that school progress lies in the principal's leadership style, which makes a significant contribution to the school. According to Kalkan et al. (2020), the principal's leadership style contributes to determining school performance. Therefore, teacher's performance is closely related to the principal's leadership style.

The principal has two responsibilities, implementing school administration to create a positive learning environment and implementing educational supervision to improve teacher teaching activities and guide student growth. Furthermore, Navaridas-Nalda et al. (2020) state that the principal's leadership is a determining factor in the educational process at school. Therefore, good leadership can improve efforts to achieve optimal learning outcomes for students (Leithwood et al., 2020; Setyaningsih & Suchyadi, 2021). To support this direction, thinking about leadership matters, namely thinking about the role and abilities or capabilities of the principal, is crucial, including improving teacher's performance in order to improve student learning outcomes. Principal's leadership can be measured using the following indicators: (1) Principal as planner, (2) Principal as initiator, (3) Principal as controller, (4) Principal as supporter, (5) Principal as informant, and (6) Principal as evaluator. Pardosi & Utari (2022) implies that when a principal is able to be a good leader, the impact is nothing less than the improved performance of the teachers they lead. This leadership has a positive impact on the sustainability of an organization and the achievement of its goals, optimizing the vision and mission of the educational organization they lead. Ayumi & Nasution (2025) also stated that principal's leadership influences teacher's performance. The roles and functions that must be carried out by the principal as a leader include educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator (Ertürk, 2022; Riani & Ain, 2022). These roles or indicators are designed to improve and enhance the teaching and learning environment. The main priority is to improve and enhance the quality of learning by enhancing the performance of the teachers in charge. Teachers each possess great potential, but this potential has not been fully realized in teaching activities because they have not received stimulation and motivation from the supervisor as the school

leader or their seniors. Instructional leadership is the ability to influence them to motivate and empower them to work to their fullest capacity. Principals are required to collaborate with their subordinates, in this case, teachers.

Teacher's performance, as defined in this study, refers to the achievements achieved as a result of a teacher's work in carrying out the duties and responsibilities assigned to them, in accordance with their authority and capabilities (Hayati et al., 2023). A teacher's performance is considered good if the teacher has implemented elements including high loyalty and commitment to teaching duties, mastery and development of learning materials, discipline in teaching and other duties, creativity in teaching, cooperation with all school members, leadership that serves as a role model for students, a good personality, honesty, and objectivity in guiding students, and responsibility for their duties. Performance refers to the level of achievement of the tasks that make up an employee's job. Performance reflects how well an employee fulfills the requirements of a job (Tarigan et al., 2021). Performance is often misinterpreted as effort, reflecting the energy expended. Teacher's performance can be measured using indicators such as (1) work skills, (2) work quality, (3) development, (4) perseverance, and (5) attendance rate. More specifically, teacher's performance can be observed from five aspects, including issues that remain. One of these is the aspect of competence, which indicates teachers' inability to collaborate in learning to improve student learning outcomes. Furthermore, work quality is generally good but still requires improvement, particularly in terms of work output and teaching methods. Furthermore, development is generally not optimal, as teachers are reluctant to undertake further studies to enhance their competencies in learning activities. Resilience, as observed, demonstrates teachers' ability to deal with diverse student characteristics, but sometimes, when teachers' learning takes place outside the classroom, students are asked to take notes on the board. Attendance is also generally well-executed but still requires improvement, particularly in terms of teachers' inability to arrive earlier than students at school. Motivation, as defined in this study, refers to the drive that arises within a person to act. This drive resides within a person, moving them to do something that aligns with their inner drive. Human drive takes various forms, such as the drive to learn, the drive to work, and the drive to achieve (Damanik, 2020). Work motivation, which originates from within a teacher, drives them to improve their performance. High work motivation significantly increases their performance (Hastari et al., 2021). Similarly, principal supervision is an external factor affecting teachers.

Based on previous observations of problems conducted by researchers in high schools throughout Babat Toman District, researchers will choose SMA PGRI Babat Toman, a private school, as their research location. SMA PGRI Babat Toman was chosen because observations showed that there are still significant differences in facilities and infrastructure among high schools in Babat Toman District, particularly at SMA PGRI Babat Toman. This indicates a lack of school facilities and a shortage of professional teaching staff to support learning activities. Consequently, teachers' performance in

delivering learning materials to students is hampered, as evidenced by the limited number of classrooms and inadequate school facilities, such as inadequate fields, with only volleyball and badminton courts at SMA PGRI Babat Toman compared to other schools. These findings can be seen from the Basic Educator Data (Dapodik) for high schools in Babat Toman District, as detailed below. SMA Negeri 1 Babat Toman has 38 teachers, most of whom are civil servants (PNS), PPPK (Employee Assistance Program), and honorary teachers. SMA Negeri 1 Babat Toman has 12 certified teachers. SMA Negeri 2 Babat Toman has 34 teachers, dominated by civil servants (PNS), followed by honorary and PPPK teachers. SMA Negeri 2 Babat Toman has 17 certified teachers. Babat Toman PGRI Senior High School has 22 teachers, the majority of whom are honorary teachers, civil servant teachers, and PPPK (Employee Training and Education) teachers. The school does not yet have any certified teachers.

Judging from the territorial boundaries, Babat Toman District is located on the outskirts of the city. Therefore, schools in Babat Toman District have very limited access compared to urban areas with good access. This makes it easy to access facilities and resources, including information, learning technology, and workshops with experts in their fields. This supports improved teacher's performance. From the Basic Educator Data (Dapodik) for high schools in Babat Toman District above, we can see that there are still many shortcomings in principal decision-making regarding teacher careers, which ultimately impact teacher's performance. Furthermore, inadequate facilities hinder teacher's motivation to teach (von Haaren-Mack et al., 2020). Many high school teachers in Babat Toman District still lack satisfactory salaries. This impacts teacher's performance and ultimately the students they teach. In other words, it can be seen that if the learning process is limited, it also impacts teacher's performance, making it less effective. Therefore, this research will also provide concrete solutions to improve teacher's performance by increasing work motivation and enhancing the leadership skills of principals. The results of this study are expected to provide relevant policy and practice recommendations to address educational management issues at the senior high school (SMA) level, specifically in Babat Toman District. Overall, the research findings are expected to make a significant contribution to both the development of educational management theory and the implementation of more effective and productive managerial practices in schools, which will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of education in Indonesia. Therefore, this research, entitled "The Influence of Principal's leadership and Work Motivation on High School Teacher's performance in Babat Toman District," is important to further understand the influence of principal's leadership and work motivation on high school teacher's performance in Babat Toman District.

B. Methods

This research was conducted in high schools across Babat Toman District. The timeframe for this study was approximately one month. This study employed a survey research method, a method in which data collection can be done using

questionnaires obtained from a sample of various people. This data will represent a specific population according to the research objectives, whether to determine who the students are, what they think, or feel, or their tendencies towards certain actions. Most people determine whether a survey is conducted or not based on the number of samples. Surveys typically involve a large number of subjects or respondents, either a portion or the entire population (census). If the sample size is large, the research is considered a survey. However, not all large sample sizes are surveys, as the data collection method must be clearly defined.

This study aims to determine the influence of the principal's leadership and motivation on teacher's performance at SMA PGRI Babat Toman. The population in this study was 94 teachers and educational staff in all schools in Babat Toman District. The sampling technique used in this study was the Slovin formula. The sample size was 76 respondents. To obtain the necessary data, several techniques were used, including questionnaires, observation, and documentation. To obtain satisfactory and focused research results, the researcher developed a research instrument outline, the purpose of which was to demonstrate the relationship between the variables being studied and the data sources or theories used. Furthermore, developing this instrument outline would facilitate the researcher in compiling questionnaire questions that were substantively related to the theory and research title being studied. This instrument outline would then be pre-tested with expert lecturers before being distributed to respondents as a tool to obtain answers to the research hypotheses. Validity testing with these experts is useful for determining whether the questionnaire meets the criteria, based on the opinions and analysis of a team of competent experts. This study used multiple regression analysis with SPSS version 26.0 to predict the value of the independent variables. The magnitude of this influence can be seen through the R-squared value of the analysis results. The R-square value indicates the magnitude of the influence of variable X on variable Y, namely the influence of managerial competence and work discipline on teacher's performance in high schools in Babat Toman sub-district.

C. Results and Discussion

The research results indicate that each hypothesis yielded a significant influence between principal's leadership and principal's motivation on teacher's performance in high schools in Babat Toman District.

The Influence of Principal's leadership on Teacher's performance in High Schools in Babat Toman District

Data collection began with observations, questionnaires, and documentation, resulting in Likert-type questionnaire results. This data served as a guideline for data processing to determine whether or not principal's leadership had an influence on teacher's performance. To determine whether the data was usable, prerequisite tests

were required before conducting more in-depth tests, including validity, normality, homogeneity, and linearity. If the data met the requirements, the researcher conducted an in-depth test to determine whether or not leadership variables had an influence on teacher's performance. The t-test results showed that the influence of principal's leadership on teacher's performance was 36.886, or a t-value of $36.886 > 1.993$, with a significance level of $0.02 < 0.05$. This means that the principal's leadership value has a positive and significant effect on teacher's performance. The results of the study support the first hypothesis: that principal's leadership influences teacher's performance in high schools throughout Babat Toman District.

The r^2 (r-square) test yielded a value of 0.948, or 94.8%. This means that 94.8% of the principal's leadership contributes to teacher's performance, while the remaining 5.3% is influenced by other factors not examined. Based on the data described, after conducting data analysis, it can be concluded that there is an influence between principal's leadership and teacher's performance. The analysis also indicates that better principal's leadership leads to better teacher's performance, and vice versa, lower principal's leadership leads to lower teacher's performance. Principal's leadership directly impacts teacher's performance in high schools throughout Babat Toman District. As a leader, it's your responsibility to maximize the school's resources to achieve established goals. The success or failure of teachers depends largely on how a leader influences their behavior in carrying out their duties.

Given its significant influence on teacher's performance, principal's leadership must be maximized to advance the school. Anselmus Dami et al. (2022) argues that principal's leadership should be defined as the ability to motivate subordinates to achieve organizational goals with full will and ability. If a leader wants to successfully motivate teachers, staff, and students, they must avoid coercive or harsh attitudes and actions (Korkmaz & Koşar, 2023). Instead, they must instill a willingness to work enthusiastically and confidently among their staff, teachers, and students. The principal's leadership, as perceived by teachers, enables them to have the inclination or drive to carry out their activities in accordance with the direction or the resulting conditions, which will impact teacher's performance.

The Influence of the Principal's Work Motivation on Teacher's performance in High Schools in Babat Toman Sub-District

After conducting observations, questionnaires, and documentation, the Likert-based questionnaire data were obtained. This data was used as a guideline for data processing to determine whether or not principal's motivation influences teacher's performance. To determine whether the data is usable, prerequisite tests are required before conducting more in-depth tests, including validity, normality, homogeneity, and linearity. If the data meets these requirements, the researcher will conduct an in-depth test to determine whether or not principal's motivation influences teacher's performance. The t-test results showed that principal's motivation influences teacher's

performance with a t-count of 26.703, or a value of $26.703 > 1.993$, with a significance value of $0.017 < 0.05$. This indicates that principal's motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher's performance. The results of this study support the second hypothesis: principal's motivation influences teacher's performance in high schools throughout Babat Toman District.

The r^2 (r-square) test yielded a result of 0.906, or 90.6%. This means that the principal's motivation contributed 90.6% to teacher's performance, while the remaining 9.4% was influenced by other factors not examined. From the test results above, it can be concluded that there is an influence between principal's motivation and teacher's performance. The analysis also suggests that high principal's motivation leads to better teacher's performance, and conversely, low principal's motivation leads to lower teacher's performance. Principal's motivation directly impacts teacher's performance in high schools throughout Babat Toman District. Kumari & Kumar (2023) explains that better motivation leads to better teacher's performance. A teacher's potential and abilities can be optimized if they receive motivation and support from their leadership. Without strong motivational support, a teacher cannot maximize their abilities in the learning process. Therefore, strong school motivation can improve teacher's performance. A teacher's potential and abilities can be optimally realized if the principal supports their motivation. Without the principal's strong motivational support, a teacher cannot maximize their potential in the learning process. Therefore, a positive school environment can improve teacher's performance.

Work motivation is a crucial factor in determining an individual's performance in achieving organizational goals. Motivation can enhance a person's commitment to their work. Teacher's performance is defined as the performance of an individual in carrying out their duties within their field of work, based on expertise, encouragement, planning, implementation, and assessment of learning, school management, and the development of knowledge, skills, and the school curriculum to provide satisfaction and enhance optimal performance, leading to success. The research findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between achievement motivation and performance. Based on the findings of this study and previous research, the influence of principal's motivation on teacher's performance is crucial, necessitating a principal-led approach to motivating teachers. Principals can achieve this by conducting academic supervision as a means of approaching and motivating teachers, thereby improving teacher's performance.

The Influence of Leadership and Motivation of the Principal on Teacher's Performance in High Schools in Babat Toman Sub-District

The process of determining the influence of the observation results, along with conducting questionnaires and documentation, resulted in the acquisition of Likert-type data. This data was used as a guideline for data processing to determine whether or not the principal's leadership and motivation influenced teacher's performance. To

determine whether the data was usable, prerequisite tests were required before conducting more in-depth tests, including validity, normality, homogeneity, and linearity. If the data met the requirements, the researcher conducted an in-depth test to determine whether the principal's leadership and motivation influenced teacher's performance. The simultaneous test yielded a significance value (sig) of $0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates a simultaneous significant effect, with the calculated f value $> f$ table, or $672.870 > 3.120$, between the independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, the results of this study support the third hypothesis: principal's leadership and motivation simultaneously influence teacher's performance.

The r^2 (r-square) test yielded a result of 0.949, or 94.9%. This means that the principal's leadership and work motivation contributed 94.9% to teacher's performance, while the remaining 5.1% was influenced by other factors not examined. The direction of the relationship between the first variable in this study was the relationship between principal's leadership and teacher's performance. Statistical calculations showed a positive relationship between principal's leadership and teacher's performance. This indicates that better principal's leadership leads to improved teacher's performance. Empirical data analysis showed positive and significant results. These results indicate that principal's leadership determines teacher's performance. The direction of the relationship between the second variable in this study was the relationship between principal's motivation and teacher's performance. Statistical calculations showed a positive relationship between principal's motivation and teacher's performance. This indicates that better principal's motivation leads to improved teacher's performance. Empirical data analysis showed positive and significant results. These results indicate that principal's motivation determines teacher's performance. Leadership factors encompass the quality of managers and term leaders in providing role models, direction, encouragement, and work support to teachers, including moral support, advice, and infrastructure and other learning support facilities (Siahaan et al., 2023). Teamwork factors encompass the quality of support, strength, and motivation among fellow teachers within a work team; cohesiveness and teamwork; and contextual (situational) factors, including pressure and changes in the external environment of individuals and groups that impact teacher's performance in particular and the quality of the institution in general. Thus, based on the findings of this study and in line with previous research, principal's leadership and motivation are closely related to teacher's performance. This relationship is thus an influence that influences teacher's performance and helps them become professional teachers.

D. Conclusion

This study conclusively demonstrates the significant impact of principal leadership and work motivation on teacher performance in Babat Toman District's high schools, based on comprehensive data analysis from 76 teachers. The findings reveal three key insights: First, principal leadership substantially enhances teacher performance, as evidenced by the t-test results ($t=36.886 > 1.993$, $p=0.02$), indicating that effective

leadership behaviors directly correlate with improved teaching outcomes. Second, principal work motivation similarly contributes to teacher performance ($t=26.703 > 1.993$, $p=0.017$), suggesting that motivated principals inspire greater dedication and effectiveness among their staff. Most significantly, the combined influence of leadership and motivation proves particularly powerful, with simultaneous testing showing exceptional predictive strength ($F=672.870 > 3.120$, $p<0.001$) and explaining 94.9% of performance variance ($R^2=0.949$). These results underscore that principal who demonstrate both strong leadership and high motivation create an environment where teachers thrive professionally. Practical implications suggest that school districts should invest in targeted leadership development programs that enhance principals' motivational strategies and management skills, as these qualities have measurable, positive effects on overall school performance. Future research should expand this inquiry in several directions: longitudinal studies could track how sustained leadership development affects teacher performance over time; comparative research across different regions would help determine if these findings hold in diverse educational contexts; and qualitative studies could explore the specific leadership behaviors and motivational techniques that most effectively inspire teachers. Additionally, investigating potential moderating factors, such as school resources or teacher experience levels, could provide deeper insights into the leadership-performance relationship. This study establishes a strong empirical foundation for understanding how principal qualities translate into educational outcomes while highlighting important avenues for further investigation and practical application in school administration.

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