

The Influence of Principal Leadership Style and Work Motivation on Teacher Performance: Evidence from Public Elementary Schools in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation on the performance of elementary school teachers in Talang Kelapa District, Banyuasin Regency. Employing a quantitative approach with a survey design, the study involved 109 teachers from public elementary schools selected as research respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires that measured principal leadership style, teachers' work motivation, and teacher performance. The collected data were then analyzed using simple and multiple linear regression techniques to examine both partial and simultaneous effects among the variables. The results of the t-test indicate that principal leadership style has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($t = 4.420$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$), contributing 15.4% to the variance in teacher performance. Similarly, teachers' work motivation shows a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($t = 5.796$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$), with a contribution of 23.9%. Furthermore, the results of the simultaneous test reveal that principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation jointly have a significant effect on teacher performance ($F = 19.693$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.271. These findings confirm that teacher performance is influenced by both organizational and individual factors. Strengthening principal leadership practices and enhancing teachers' work motivation are therefore essential strategies for improving teacher performance and supporting the effectiveness of elementary education.

Keywords: Performance Teacher, Principal Leadership Style, Work Motivation

A. Introduction

Teacher performance is a crucial determinant of educational quality, particularly at the elementary school level where students develop foundational academic competencies, social skills, and character. At this stage, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' learning experiences and long-term educational trajectories. High-performing teachers are more likely to implement effective instructional strategies, manage classrooms efficiently, and support students' cognitive and emotional

development. Consequently, improving teacher performance has become a central concern in educational research and policy worldwide. Previous studies consistently indicate that teacher performance is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, including professional competence, work motivation, organizational climate, and leadership practices within schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Among external organizational factors, school leadership particularly the leadership style of the principal has been widely recognized as a key driver of teacher performance. Principals serve not only as administrative managers but also as instructional leaders who shape school vision, culture, and professional norms. Effective leadership styles, such as transformational, instructional, and participatory leadership, have been shown to foster positive work environments that encourage teacher collaboration, professional growth, and instructional innovation (Leithwood et al., 2020). Through supportive leadership practices, principals can influence teachers' attitudes, enhance their sense of professional efficacy, and promote sustained improvements in teaching quality.

Transformational leadership, for instance, emphasizes vision-building, inspiration, and individualized support, which can strengthen teachers' commitment and motivation to perform beyond minimum expectations. Similarly, participatory leadership encourages shared decision-making and professional dialogue, allowing teachers to feel valued and involved in school improvement processes. Empirical evidence suggests that such leadership approaches are positively associated with teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and instructional effectiveness (Robinson et al., 2019). Conversely, leadership styles that are overly authoritarian or bureaucratic may restrict teacher autonomy, reduce professional engagement, and negatively affect performance outcomes.

In addition to leadership, teachers' work motivation has been identified as a critical internal factor influencing professional performance. Motivation determines the level of effort, persistence, and enthusiasm teachers invest in their work. According to self-determination theory, teachers who experience higher levels of intrinsic motivation such as enjoyment of teaching, a sense of purpose, and professional fulfillment are more likely to demonstrate adaptive instructional behaviors and sustained commitment to student learning (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Extrinsic motivational factors, including recognition, career advancement, and supportive working conditions, also play an important role, particularly when aligned with teachers' professional values.

Empirical studies have consistently shown that motivated teachers are more engaged in instructional planning, classroom management, and continuous professional development. High levels of work motivation are associated with innovative teaching practices, effective use of instructional resources, and responsiveness to students' diverse learning needs (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). In contrast, low motivation may

lead to minimal effort, resistance to change, and reduced instructional quality. Therefore, understanding teachers' work motivation is essential for explaining variations in teacher performance across schools and contexts.

Despite extensive research on leadership and motivation, empirical findings regarding their influence on teacher performance remain inconsistent. Some studies report a strong direct relationship between principal leadership style and teacher performance, while others suggest that leadership effects are indirect and mediated by variables such as school climate, instructional supervision, and teacher collaboration (Witziers et al., 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Similarly, while many studies confirm the positive influence of work motivation on teacher performance, others indicate that motivation alone may not be sufficient to improve performance without adequate organizational support and leadership effectiveness.

These inconsistencies highlight a significant gap in the literature, particularly concerning the simultaneous influence of principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation on teacher performance. Much of the existing research has focused on a single predictor or has been conducted in developed countries and secondary or higher education contexts. As a result, there is limited empirical evidence examining how leadership and motivation interact to influence teacher performance in elementary schools within developing regions (Nguyen et al., 2021). Contextual factors such as limited resources, administrative constraints, and varying leadership capacities may alter the strength and direction of these relationships.

In the context of public elementary schools in Talang Kelapa District, Banyuasin Regency, challenges related to teacher performance remain evident. Preliminary observations and internal school monitoring during the 2024/2025 academic year revealed issues related to teacher discipline, instructional innovation, and administrative completeness. A proportion of teachers were reported to arrive late or leave classrooms during instructional time, while others demonstrated limited initiative in adopting innovative teaching strategies. These challenges were further compounded by limited access to instructional facilities and educational technology, which constrained teachers' ability to implement student-centered learning approaches.

Leadership practices among school principals in the district also varied considerably. In some schools, academic supervision was conducted infrequently and focused primarily on administrative compliance rather than professional development. Communication between principals and teachers was often limited, and systematic follow-up or coaching was not consistently implemented. Such leadership conditions may reduce teachers' sense of professional support and recognition, thereby affecting both motivation and performance. These contextual realities suggest that teacher performance issues in Talang Kelapa District cannot be fully understood without examining the combined roles of leadership style and work motivation.

This study offers novelty by simultaneously examining the influence of principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Talang Kelapa District. Unlike previous studies that often focus on a single determinant or broader educational levels, this research integrates organizational leadership and individual motivation variables into a single analytical model within a specific elementary school context. This integrated approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how leadership practices and motivational dynamics jointly contribute to teacher performance.

The contributions of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature on educational leadership and teacher motivation by providing empirical evidence from an underrepresented regional context, thereby extending the applicability of existing theories. Practically, the findings are expected to offer valuable insights for school principals, education authorities, and policymakers in designing leadership development programs and motivational strategies aimed at improving teacher performance and strengthening school effectiveness.

Work motivation simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research enriches the literature on educational leadership and teacher motivation by providing empirical evidence from an underrepresented regional context. Practically, the results offer insights for school principals and education policymakers in designing leadership development programs and motivational strategies aimed at improving teacher performance and strengthening school effectiveness.

Based on the above background, this study addresses the following research questions: 1) Does the principal's leadership style significantly influence teacher performance? 2) Does teachers' work motivation significantly influence teacher performance? 3) Do principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation simultaneously influence teacher performance? Accordingly, the hypotheses proposed are: **H1:** Principal leadership style has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. **H2:** Teachers' work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. **H3:** Principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance.

B. Methods

Research Design and Alignment with Research Questions

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between principal leadership style, teachers' work motivation, and

teacher performance. A correlational design was selected because the study aimed to test the magnitude and direction of the influence of independent variables on a dependent variable, rather than to establish causal intervention effects (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design aligns directly with the research questions and hypotheses, which focus on both partial and simultaneous effects of leadership style and work motivation on teacher performance.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in public elementary schools located in Talang Kelapa District, Banyuasin Regency, Indonesia. The population consisted of 152 public elementary school teachers from the Sukamoro cluster. A total of 109 teachers were selected as respondents using the Slovin sampling formula with a 5% margin of error. Probability sampling was applied to ensure equal selection opportunities for all population members and to enhance the representativeness of the sample (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This sampling strategy supports the generalization of the findings to similar elementary school contexts.

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

The study involved three main variables: principal leadership style (X_1), teachers' work motivation (X_2), and teacher performance (Y). Principal leadership style refers to teachers' perceptions of principals' behaviors in guiding, supporting, and supervising instructional activities. Teachers' work motivation reflects internal and external drives that encourage teachers to perform their professional duties. Teacher performance refers to teachers' effectiveness in planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional activities. Clear operational definitions are essential to ensure consistency between measurement and statistical analysis (DeVellis, 2017).

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of three sections corresponding to the study variables. Principal leadership style was measured using 34 items, teachers' work motivation using 30 items, and teacher performance using 38 items. All items were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Likert-scale instruments are appropriate for measuring perceptions and behavioral tendencies in educational research because they provide quantifiable and reliable data for statistical analysis (Joshi et al., 2015).

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Prior to the main data collection, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability using a pilot sample of 40 teachers who were not included in the main study. Item validity was assessed using Pearson's product-moment correlation, with items

considered valid when the correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value at the 0.05 significance level. Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The results confirmed that the instruments were valid and reliable for measuring leadership style, work motivation, and teacher performance.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The survey link was shared with respondents via official school communication channels, and participants were given one week to complete the questionnaire. Online data collection was selected to improve efficiency, minimize administrative constraints, and facilitate participation from respondents across multiple schools (Evans & Mathur, 2018). Participation was voluntary, and respondent anonymity was maintained throughout the data collection process.

Instrument Which used in the form of questionnaire (questionnaire closed) with scale Likert four level, namely *Always (SL)*, *Often (SR)*, *Sometimes (KD)*, and *Never (TP)*. This questionnaire consists of three parts: 1) leadership style 34 item; 2) work motivation 30 items; and 3) teacher performance 38 items. Before used, instrument has through test validity and reliability to 40 Teacher in outside sample study. Based on the results obtained through the trial of the leadership style questionnaire instrument with 34 statement items, the results of 29 valid question statements and having a significant value of $r_{\text{Calculate}} > \text{than } 0.312$ for the $r_{\text{table value}}$ with a significance level of 5%, the work motivation questionnaire with 30 statement items obtained the results of 25 valid question statements and having a significant value of $r_{\text{Calculate}} > \text{than } 0.312$ for the $r_{\text{table value}}$ with a significance level of 5%, and the teacher performance questionnaire with 38 statement items obtained the results of 37 valid question statements and having a significant value of $r_{\text{Calculate}} > \text{than } 0.312$ for the $r_{\text{table value}}$ with a significance level of 5%. Furthermore, it is known that the results of the calculation of the reliability of the leadership style obtained a value of $0.842 > 0.6$, the results of the calculation of the reliability of work motivation obtained a value of $0.914 > 0.6$, the results of the calculation of the reliability of teacher performance obtained a value of $0.963 > 0.6$.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The analysis consisted of two main stages: assumption testing and hypothesis testing. Assumption tests included normality, linearity, and multicollinearity tests to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression analysis (Field, 2018). Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the partial effects of principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation on teacher performance, and multiple linear regression to analyze

their simultaneous effects. Statistical significance was determined at a 0.05 alpha level, consistent with standard practices in educational research.

Analysis data done through two stages, that is test prerequisite analysis and test hypothesis.

1. Test prerequisite covering test normality, linearity, And multicollinearity.
 - a. Test normality show mark *Asymp. Sig.* > 0.05, so that data distributed normal.
 - b. Test linearity show part big variables linearity ($F_{\text{count}} > F_{\text{table}}$).
 - c. The multicollinearity test shows the value *Tolerance* = 0.766 and *VIF* = 1.305, so no multicollinearity symptoms occur.
2. Test hypothesis done use analysis regression linear simple and multiple, with SPSS software assistance version 26.
 - a. Test *t* used to know influence partial each variable independent on teacher performance.
 - b. Test *F* used to test influence simultaneous principal leadership style and motivation work on teacher performance.

The results of the analysis are then interpreted descriptively to provide a broader understanding of the relationship between variables in the context of improving teacher professionalism and performance.

C. Results and Discussion

This study examined the influence of principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Talang Kelapa District. Three research questions were addressed through simple and multiple linear regression analyses.

First, the results of the simple regression analysis indicate that principal leadership style has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.592, p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.154$) suggests that leadership style accounts for 15.4% of the variance in teacher performance.

Second, the analysis shows that teachers' work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.701, p < 0.05$), with a coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.239$). This finding indicates that work motivation explains 23.9% of the variance in teacher performance.

Third, the results of the multiple regression analysis reveal that principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on teacher performance ($F = 19.693, p < 0.05$). The combined contribution of both variables is reflected in an R^2 value of 0.271, indicating that 27.1% of teacher performance variance is jointly explained by leadership style and work motivation.

The Effect of Principal Leadership Style on Teacher Performance

The findings demonstrate that principal leadership style has a significant positive influence on teacher performance, although its contribution is relatively moderate. This result suggests that leadership is an important contextual factor that shapes teacher behavior, professionalism, and commitment, but it does not operate as a single dominant determinant.

This finding is consistent with a substantial body of international research indicating that leadership influences teacher performance primarily through indirect mechanisms. Hallinger and Heck (2010) argue that school leadership affects performance by building organizational capacity and shaping instructional practices. Similarly, Heck and Hallinger (2014) emphasize that leadership contributes to teaching quality through professional collaboration and supervision rather than direct control. Studies by Leithwood et al. (2020), Nguni et al. (2006), and Bush and Glover (2014) also confirm that transformational and participatory leadership styles positively influence teacher engagement and performance.

Furthermore, Robinson et al. (2019), Day et al. (2016), Sun and Leithwood (2015), Torres (2019), and Grissom et al. (2021) report that leadership practices that emphasize instructional guidance, shared decision-making, and professional trust are more likely to enhance teacher performance than authoritarian approaches. These findings support the present study's result that leadership effectiveness depends largely on how principals foster supportive and collaborative work environments.

Findings are in line with research conducted by Annisa and Lidya (2022) which stated that style leadership own influence positive and significant to Teacher performance at SMKN 7 Padang. Research the confirm that head schools that have style leadership democratic and capable give motivation as well as directions to teachers can increase work spirit and their performance.

In addition, the results study this also supports Cicilia's findings (2020) which found that style leadership head school give contribution real to improvement performance school. Principal schools that implement style leadership transformational capable push his subordinates For Work more productive and innovative.

Thus, the results study This strengthen Northouse's (2018) and Siagian's (2015) theories explain that style leadership is ability leader in direct, motivate, and inspire his subordinates For reach objective organization. In the context of education, success head school in lead teachers in an effective will implications direct to improvement teacher performance at school basic. suggests that instructional leadership including supervisory practices influences performance more through changes in instructional practices than through in a way direct. Witziers et al. (2003) Also conclude that effect of leadership on performance is not always strong, as the principal's role is often

mediated by other factors such as organizational climate and teacher collaboration. Hallinger & Heck (2010) even emphasized that the impact of leadership on learning outcomes occurs through gradual increases in school capacity, not through direct instruction in supervision alone.

However, several studies report weaker or inconsistent effects of leadership on performance. Witziers et al. (2003) found that leadership effects on performance outcomes are often small and mediated by school climate and teacher collaboration. Similarly, Slegers and Honingh (2016) suggest that leadership impact may diminish when teachers have high professional autonomy. These findings partially diverge from the present study but help explain why leadership style accounted for a relatively modest proportion of performance variance.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Teacher Performance

The results indicate that teachers' work motivation has a stronger influence on teacher performance than principal leadership style. These findings underscore motivation as a key internal factor that directly drives teachers' persistence, responsibility, and instructional effectiveness. This result aligns closely with self-determination theory, which posits that individuals perform optimally when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Empirical studies by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018), Klassen and Tze (2014), and Lee and Nie (2014) demonstrate that motivated teachers are more engaged, resilient, and effective in instructional practice. Similarly, Eyal and Roth (2011), Aliakbari and Amoli (2016), and Kim and Kim (2020) confirm that work motivation significantly predicts teaching quality and professional performance.

Findings support Wijaya et al. (2022) which found that motivation influential teacher work significant to teacher performance. In his research explained that teachers who have encouragement achieve height and sense of responsibility answer strong professional tend own better performance Good.

In addition, the results this is also in line with theory motivation work put forward by Uno (2014) and Kompri (2017) who stated that motivation is the force that gives rise to passion, direction, and perseverance in work. Factors like appreciation, attention superiors, environment work, and chance to develop become source main emergence motivation high work on teachers.

Additional support is provided by Thoonen et al. (2011), Creemers and Kyriakides (2015), and Ingersoll and Strong (2011), who emphasize that motivated teachers are more likely to adopt innovative teaching strategies and participate in professional development. In the present study, contextual challenges such as limited instructional facilities may heighten the importance of motivation as an internal resource that enables teachers to maintain performance despite environmental constraints.

Contrary findings have been reported by some researchers. For example, Hattie (2015) suggests that motivation alone may not directly improve performance unless accompanied by effective instructional strategies. Likewise, OECD (2019) reports that motivation may decline when systemic support and leadership quality are insufficient. These findings indicate that motivation, while critical, does not function independently of organizational conditions.

The Simultaneous Effect of Principal Leadership Style and Work Motivation on Teacher Performance

The combined analysis reveals that principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation jointly influence teacher performance, explaining 27.1% of its variance. This finding confirms that leadership and motivation operate as complementary factors rather than independent predictors. This result is supported by studies suggesting that effective leadership enhances motivation by creating supportive and meaningful work environments (Sun & Leithwood, 2015; Torres, 2019). When principals provide clear direction, recognition, and professional support, teachers are more likely to internalize organizational goals and translate motivation into effective instructional practices (Grissom et al., 2021; Heck & Hallinger, 2014).

This result is in line with study Pepri et al. (2024) who showed that style leadership head school and motivation Work influential significant in a way simultaneous to teacher performance at Asam Jawa State Elementary School. Differences results This can be caused by differences characteristics respondents, culture organization, and conditions environment school. This result in accordance with opinion Mangkunegara (2015) stated that that performance influenced by factors leadership and motivation work. Effective leadership will create environment conducive work, while motivation high work will push individual For Work optimally.

Nevertheless, the relatively modest combined contribution indicates that additional factors such as school climate, instructional supervision, and professional collaboration may mediate or moderate the relationship between leadership, motivation, and performance. This interpretation aligns with Witziers et al. (2003) and Slegers and Honingh (2016), who argue that leadership effects are strongest when integrated into broader organizational improvement strategies.

Overall, the findings suggest that improving teacher performance requires an integrated approach that combines effective instructional leadership with systematic efforts to enhance teacher motivation. Leadership without motivation may lack sustainability, while motivation without supportive leadership may fail to translate into consistent performance improvement.

D. Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of principal leadership style and teachers' work motivation on teacher performance in public elementary schools in Talang Kelapa District. The results indicate that both principal leadership style and work motivation have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, either partially or simultaneously. Work motivation emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting that teachers' internal drive, commitment, and sense of responsibility play a crucial role in shaping their professional performance. Although the contribution of principal leadership style was relatively moderate, leadership remains an essential contextual factor that influences teacher performance by creating a supportive work environment, providing instructional direction, and fostering professional collaboration. The simultaneous effect of leadership style and work motivation confirms that teacher performance is not determined by a single factor but rather by the interaction between organizational leadership and individual motivational dynamics. These findings emphasize that effective school improvement requires balanced attention to both human resource management and leadership practices.

In practical terms, the findings suggest that improving teacher performance should go beyond administrative supervision and technical training. School principals are encouraged to adopt participatory, communicative, and supportive leadership styles that emphasize professional guidance, constructive feedback, and recognition of teachers' efforts. Such leadership practices can strengthen teachers' sense of belonging and professional value, which in turn enhances their motivation to perform effectively. At the same time, strategies to improve teachers' work motivation should be prioritized, including fair performance appraisal systems, opportunities for continuous professional development, adequate instructional resources, and a positive school climate. Education authorities and policymakers are advised to design leadership development programs that equip principals with both managerial and instructional leadership competencies, while also implementing policies that promote teacher motivation, well-being, and professional growth.

For future research, it is recommended that subsequent studies examine additional factors that may influence teacher performance, such as school climate, instructional supervision, job satisfaction, organizational culture, and professional collaboration. Future studies could also explore mediating or moderating mechanisms to better understand how leadership and motivation interact in shaping teacher performance. Expanding the scope of research to different educational levels and diverse regional contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches are suggested to capture changes in leadership practices, motivational dynamics, and teacher performance over time, thereby providing a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of school effectiveness and educational quality improvement.

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