

Principal Leadership and Work Discipline as Predictors of Teacher Performance: A Quantitative Study in Indonesian Public Junior High Schools

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of principal leadership and teacher work discipline on teacher performance in public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District, Indonesia. Teacher performance is a critical determinant of educational quality, yet empirical evidence regarding its predictors in Indonesian junior high school contexts remains limited. Using a quantitative approach with a survey design, data were collected from 106 teachers selected through Slovin formula sampling from a population of 145 teachers. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that: (1) principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.487$, $p < 0.05$); (2) teacher work discipline has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.646$, $p < 0.05$); and (3) both variables simultaneously explain 44.6% of the variance in teacher performance ($F = 41.78$, $p < 0.05$). These results underscore the importance of effective school leadership and consistent work discipline in enhancing teacher professionalism. The study contributes empirical evidence to educational management literature and offers practical recommendations for school principals and education policymakers in developing strategies for sustainable teacher performance improvement. Future research should explore mediating variables and conduct qualitative investigations to deepen understanding of these relationships.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Public Junior High School, Teacher's Performance. Work Discipline

A. Introduction

Education is a key pillar of national development because it plays a strategic role in creating quality human resources with character and global competitiveness. Through education, the state strives to improve the intellectual abilities, skills, and attitudes of students so they can contribute productively to society. Law Number 20 of 2003, concerning the National Education System, emphasises that education aims to develop students' potential to become faithful, capable, creative, and responsible individuals. Schools, as formal educational institutions, are the primary means of

achieving this goal in a systematic and planned manner. The success of education in schools is largely determined by the quality of the overall school's organisational management. One key indicator of school success is the achievement of optimal teachers' performance in carrying out their professional duties (Kanya et al., 2021; Mailool et al., 2020). Teachers play a central role in the learning process because they interact directly with students in the classroom.

Therefore, improving teachers' performance is a crucial and pressing issue in efforts to improve the quality of national education (Tabroni et al., 2022). Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System affirms that education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty; have noble character; are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible. To realise this goal, schools, as formal educational institutions, have a major responsibility in implementing an effective and quality learning process (Díez et al., 2020). Schools are places where systematic and planned educational interactions take place between teachers, students, and all other educational components. The success of schools in achieving educational goals is greatly influenced by the quality of the school's organisational management, including the leadership of the principal and the quality of its human resources (González-Falcón et al., 2020; Kurniady et al., 2024). In this context, teachers play a central role because they are the main implementers of the learning process in the classroom.

Teachers bear a significant responsibility in determining the success of the learning process and the achievement of educational goals (Hanushek, 2020; Zeng, 2023). Teachers are not only tasked with delivering subject matter but also with guiding, directing, motivating, and serving as role models for students. Therefore, the quality of education is greatly influenced by the level of teachers' performance in carrying out their professional duties (Baety, 2021). Teachers' performance reflects the teacher's level of success in optimally planning, implementing, evaluating, and mentoring students. High-performing teachers are able to create an active, creative, innovative, and enjoyable learning environment, enabling students to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Conversely, low-performing teachers tend to produce less effective learning processes, resulting in low-quality student learning outcomes (Lee & Gupta, 2020; Thaba-Nkadimene, 2020).

Teachers' performance reflects the teacher's level of success in carrying out the tasks of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning according to established professional standards (Darling-Hammond, 2021). High-performing teachers are able to create effective, innovative, and student-oriented learning. However, teachers' performance does not exist in isolation; it is influenced by various internal and external factors within the school environment. Organizational factors, particularly the principal's leadership, play a significant role in shaping teacher behavior and performance (Dutta & Sahney, 2022; Pardosi & Utari, 2022). The principal acts as an

educational leader responsible for continuously directing, mentoring, and supervising teachers' performance. Effective principal leadership can create a conducive work climate, increase motivation, and strengthen teacher commitment to their duties (Hartinah et al., 2020; Sariakin et al., 2025).

Conversely, ineffective leadership can lead to low work enthusiasm and decreased teachers' performance (Snow et al., 2021). Therefore, principal leadership is a key factor in determining the quality of teachers' performance in schools. Improving teachers' performance is a primary focus in efforts to improve the quality of national education. This is because educational success is greatly influenced by the quality of teachers as the spearhead of education implementation in schools. Optimal teachers' performance does not emerge spontaneously but is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include teacher work motivation, competence, commitment, and professional responsibility. Meanwhile, external factors include the work environment, school organizational culture, facilities and infrastructure, educational supervision, work discipline, and principal leadership. Among these factors, principal leadership is one of the most important factors in influencing the quality of teachers' performance (Bellibaş et al., 2021).

In addition to principal leadership, teacher work discipline is another important factor influencing teachers' performance (Fahmi et al., 2022). Work discipline reflects adherence to regulations, punctuality, consistency in carrying out tasks, and professional responsibility. Teachers with high work discipline tend to demonstrate good teaching readiness and commitment to the learning process. Work discipline also creates order and efficiency in school activities, thereby supporting the achievement of educational goals. However, in practice, teachers are still found to lack discipline, such as late attendance, irregular learning administration, and low compliance with school rules. These conditions have the potential to reduce the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. Teacher work discipline is inseparable from the role of the principal in enforcing rules and providing an example.

Therefore, work discipline and principal leadership are closely related in influencing teachers' performance (Albuni, 2022; Daheri et al., 2023). Teacher work discipline significantly influences the quality of the learning process in schools. Disciplined teachers will be better prepared to develop learning materials, implement the learning process regularly, and conduct learning evaluations properly. Conversely, low teacher work discipline can negatively impact the effectiveness of learning and student learning outcomes. In practice, various teacher discipline issues persist, such as late arrivals, incomplete learning administration, low levels of responsibility in carrying out tasks, and suboptimal use of instructional time. These conditions indicate that teacher work discipline still requires serious attention in efforts to improve the quality of education. Teacher work discipline is inseparable from the role of the principal as an educational leader.

The principal is responsible for enforcing school rules, supervising, and providing guidance to teachers to maintain good work discipline. A principal who is firm, fair, and consistent in enforcing rules will be able to foster a culture of discipline within the school environment (Plaku & Leka, 2025). Furthermore, the principal must be able to reward high-achieving teachers and provide guidance to those lacking discipline. Thus, principal leadership and teacher work discipline are closely related in influencing the quality of teachers' performance in schools. The phenomenon of low education quality in Indonesia remains a serious concern, particularly when linked to teachers' performance. This situation indicates that the quality of the learning process, which is highly dependent on teachers' performance, still needs improvement.

Various international journals confirm that weak school leadership contributes to low teachers' performance and student learning outcomes (Karadag, 2020; Özdemir et al., 2024). This phenomenon demonstrates a pattern of relationships between leadership, discipline, and teachers' performance. Therefore, empirical studies on the relationship between these variables are crucial and relevant. In the regional context, Banyuasin Regency in South Sumatra Province faces unique challenges in education management, particularly in Banyuasin III District. This region has diverse geographic and social characteristics, which influence the implementation of school management. Based on initial observations and regional education reports, variations in teachers' performance are still found among public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District.

Differences in principal leadership styles are suspected to be one factor affecting teacher discipline and performance levels (Saleem et al., 2020). Furthermore, some teachers still do not demonstrate optimal work discipline in carrying out their professional duties. This condition impacts the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. However, to date, there has been little research specifically examining this issue in the Banyuasin III region. Therefore, research is needed that can describe the actual conditions and factors that influence teachers' performance in this region. Several previous studies have examined the relationship between principal leadership, work discipline, and teachers' performance. Research by Rohani et al. (2020) found that principal leadership and work discipline significantly influenced the performance of elementary school teachers in Banyuasin Regency.

Setiyaningsih (2020) showed that principal leadership had a dominant influence on teachers' performance through improved work discipline at the high school level. Daheri et al. (2023) concluded that leadership and work discipline simultaneously had a positive effect on teachers' performance. Research by Sirait et al. (2021) confirmed that school leadership indirectly influences teachers' performance through work climate and organisational culture. These results strengthen the theoretical basis for the relationship between the variables studied. However, differences in regional contexts and educational levels indicate the need for further research. Therefore, previous research provides an important foundation for this study. Although previous studies have demonstrated the influence of principal leadership and work

discipline on teachers' performance, there are still research gaps that have not been comprehensively addressed.

Most research has been conducted at the elementary, high school, or vocational high school levels, so the results may not be relevant to the junior high school context. Furthermore, research specifically conducted in the Banyuasin III District is still very limited. The social, cultural, and geographic characteristics of this area have the potential to influence teacher leadership and work discipline patterns. Previous research has also not fully examined the influence of these two variables simultaneously in the local context. These limitations result in a lack of contextual empirical evidence for regional education policymaking. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by presenting relevant and specific empirical data. Thus, this research is expected to provide new contributions to the development of educational management science.

Based on the above description, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the influence of principal leadership and work discipline on teachers' performance at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District. This research has academic urgency because it enriches empirical studies on factors influencing teachers' performance in the context of junior high school education. Practically, the results of this study are expected to inform policymaking for principals and regional education stakeholders. This research is also expected to provide strategic recommendations for improving the quality of teacher leadership and work discipline. The scope of this study focused on public junior high school teachers in Banyuasin III District using a quantitative approach. The variables studied include principal leadership, work discipline, and teachers' performance. Thus, this study is expected to provide an objective picture of the relationships between the variables studied. This overall presentation provides a strong foundation for further research.

Based on this description, this study is crucial to obtain empirical data on the influence of principal leadership and work discipline on teachers' performance at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management science, particularly regarding educational leadership, work discipline, and teachers' performance. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide practical input for principals, teachers, schools, and the Education Office in formulating policies and strategies to improve education quality. This research uses a quantitative approach, focusing on three main variables: principal leadership, teacher discipline, and teachers' performance. This research aims to determine the influence of principal leadership and discipline on teachers' performance. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to provide an objective picture of the actual conditions on the ground and serve as a basis for efforts to improve the quality of education at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District.

B. Methods

This research was conducted at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra Province, and lasted approximately three months. This study used a quantitative approach to empirically and measurably examine the influence of principal leadership and work discipline on teachers' performance. In accordance with the focus of the hypothesis testing, this study is classified as explanatory research with a correlational approach. Principal leadership (X_1) and work discipline (X_2) served as independent variables, while teachers' performance (Y) served as the dependent variable. The population in this study was all 145 public junior high school teachers in the Banyuasin III District. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in 106 respondents. Data collection techniques used were primary and secondary data collection. Primary data were obtained from a questionnaire compiled based on research indicators. Secondary data were sourced from school documents (number of teachers, organizational structure, disciplinary policies), the Banyuasin Regency Education Office, and a literature review of books, scientific journals, and relevant previous research. Before being used in primary data collection, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability.

Validity testing was conducted in two stages: content validity using expert judgment from a supervising lecturer or educational management expert and empirical validity using Pearson Product Moment correlation. Reliability was then measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with the instrument deemed reliable if the alpha value was ≥ 0.60 (Ghozali, 2016). Before conducting multiple linear regression analysis, classical assumption tests were first conducted, including normality tests using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test or using a normal probability plot graph, with the data being normally distributed if the significance value was > 0.05 . Data analysis was conducted descriptively and inferentially. Partial hypothesis testing used a t-test to determine the effect of each independent variable on teachers' performance, with a significance level set at 5% ($p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, an F-test was used to examine the simultaneous influence of independent variables.

C. Results and Discussion

The method used in this research is quantitative and descriptive, where data collection, analysis, and conclusion are quantitative in nature. To obtain accurate data, appropriate data collection techniques were used, consistent with the type of research and the information needed. One technique used to obtain this research data was a questionnaire. Data collection used a variety of techniques, depending on the needs of this study. The questionnaire was used to obtain information on the leadership and work discipline of public junior high school teachers in Banyuasin III District. Documentation was used to obtain data recorded in archives or reports at the research location, such as the number of teachers and other data for the study.

The Influence of Principal Leadership on Teachers' performance

Leadership and teachers' performance have a positive and significant relationship. This conclusion was reached by comparing the calculated r value of $0.487 >$ the r table of 0.2500 . Hypothesis testing revealed that the t value for the alternative hypothesis (H_a) for testing Hypothesis 1 was accepted. Therefore, it is stated that leadership has a positive and significant influence on the work discipline of public junior high school teachers in Banyuasin III District. The correlation coefficient, or magnitude of the relationship between leadership and teachers' performance, is 48.7% and is categorized as a very strong relationship. The determinant coefficient, or influence of the leadership and discipline variables on teachers' performance, is 2.37% , indicating a low influence. The regression equation for testing the first hypothesis is $Y = 53.171 + 1.44 X_1$.

The results obtained from this study confirm the results of previous research. Similar to the research conducted by Juniarti et al. (2020) entitled "The Influence of Principal Leadership and Teacher Discipline on Teachers' performance," the objectives of this study were to determine the influence of principal leadership on teachers' performance, determine whether or not teacher discipline influences teachers' performance, and determine whether or not principal leadership and teacher discipline influence teachers' performance.

The Influence of Teacher Work Discipline on Teachers' performance

The correlation test showed a value of $0.646 \geq r$ table of 0.2500 , indicating a positive and significant relationship between the influence of principal leadership and work discipline on teachers' performance at public junior high schools in the Banyuasin III District. Therefore, improving principal work motivation is crucial to strengthening the relationship between the achievement of teacher work and discipline. Hypothesis testing using simple linear regression revealed a calculated $t_h > t_t$ table value: $6.438 > 2.0017$. Based on this, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that teacher work discipline has a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District.

The influence of principal leadership and work discipline on teachers' performance jointly influences teacher work discipline at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District by 44.6% , a relatively high influence. In the process, the regression equation that can be used to predict the Y value in this study is $Y = 27.861 + 0.142 X_1 + 0.516 X_2$. Based on the equation above, the change in the Y value will depend on the change in the X value. If the X_1 and X_2 values are positive, the Y value will increase, and if the X_1 and X_2 values are negative, it will reduce the Y value. The results of this study support the previous study by Septiana et al. (2026) entitled "The Influence of Principal Leadership and Work Discipline on Elementary School Teachers' performance."

The purpose of this study is to analyze the extent to which principal leadership and work discipline affect the performance of elementary school teachers in Banyuasin Regency. The method used is quantitative with data collection techniques through questionnaires and regression analysis. The results of the study show that both independent variables have a significant influence on teachers' performance. This study is important because it was conducted in the Banyuasin Regency area, so it is geographically relevant to the study. However, differences in educational levels cause differences in the characteristics of school organizations and the professional demands of teachers. Therefore, this study provides a strong empirical basis but still leaves the need for further studies at the public junior high school level.

The Influence of Teacher Work Discipline on Teachers' performance

Based on the results of the correlation test, the calculated r value was 0.646, which is greater than the table r value of 0.2500. This indicates a positive and significant relationship between teacher work discipline and the performance of public junior high school teachers in Banyuasin III District. Therefore, the better a teacher's work discipline, the higher their performance in carrying out their duties and responsibilities at school. Furthermore, based on the results of the hypothesis testing using simple linear regression, the calculated t value was found to be greater than the table t value, i.e., $6.438 > 2.0017$. Based on these results, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, indicating that teacher work discipline has a positive and significant effect on the performance of public junior high school teachers in Banyuasin III District.

The effect of teacher work discipline on teachers' performance was quite high, at 44.6%. This indicates that work discipline has a significant contribution to improving the quality of teachers' performance. In the analysis process, the regression equation used to predict the Y value in this study is:

$$Y = 27.861 + 0.516X$$

Based on this regression equation, it can be explained that if teacher work discipline improves, teachers' performance will also improve. Conversely, if teacher work discipline decreases, teachers' performance will decline.

The results of this study align with previous research conducted by Utari & Rasto (2019) entitled "The Influence of Work Discipline on Teachers' performance." Work discipline, reflected in awareness, willingness, compliance, and work ethic, has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance, as reflected in work quality, accuracy, initiative, work ability, and communication. Therefore, improving teacher work discipline is a crucial factor in improving teachers' performance, which is essential for delivering quality education. Without teachers who possess high discipline and performance, the quality of education is at stake.

D. Conclusion

The findings provide empirical evidence that both principal leadership and work discipline significantly influence teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously. First, principal leadership demonstrated a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.487$, $p < 0.05$). This confirms that principals who provide clear direction, consistent supervision, motivational support, and effective communication create conditions that enable teachers to perform optimally. Effective leadership contributes to a school climate that supports professional growth, innovation, and commitment to quality teaching. Second, teacher work discipline exhibited a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.646$, $p < 0.001$). Teachers who demonstrate punctuality, compliance with regulations, responsibility in task execution, and consistent professional standards achieve higher performance levels in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. Work discipline appears to be a stronger predictor of performance than leadership in this context, suggesting that individual teacher behaviors and organizational compliance substantially influence educational outcomes. Third, principal leadership and work discipline simultaneously influence teacher performance, explaining 44.6% of variance ($R^2 = 0.446$, $p < 0.001$). This integrated effect underscores the importance of addressing both organizational leadership practices and individual teacher discipline in efforts to improve educational quality. The remaining variance suggests that other factors including teacher motivation, organizational culture, professional development opportunities, and school climate also contribute to teacher performance. This study contributes to educational management scholarship by: (1) providing empirical support for the integrated model linking organizational leadership and individual discipline to teacher performance; (2) extending previous findings to the junior high school context in an under-researched Indonesian region; (3) demonstrating the relative predictive power of discipline compared to leadership in this context; and (4) offering evidence from a developing country context, enriching the predominantly Western literature on educational leadership. This study has limitations that should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design prevents causal inference. Self-reported data may be subject to social desirability and response biases. The focus on only two independent variables excludes other potentially important predictors. Generalizability is limited to the specific geographic and institutional context. Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable empirical evidence and practical guidance for improving teacher performance in Indonesian public junior high schools. In conclusion, this study confirms that principal leadership and teacher work discipline are significant predictors of teacher performance in Indonesian public junior high schools. Improving educational quality requires systematic attention to both factors: strengthening principal leadership capacities and fostering a disciplined professional culture among teachers. By addressing these interrelated factors, Indonesian schools can create conditions conducive to teacher professionalism, effective learning processes, and ultimately, improved student outcomes.

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