

The Influence of the Principal's Transformational Leadership and Organizational Work Culture on Teachers' Performance at Public Middle Schools

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of principal's transformational leadership and organizational work culture on teachers' performance in Public Junior High Schools in Banyuasin III District. Employing a quantitative causal-associative design, the research involved 103 teachers selected through Slovin's formula and proportional random sampling. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed via multiple linear regression. The results reveal that: (1) transformational leadership has a positive and significant partial effect on teachers' performance; (2) organizational work culture also exerts a positive and significant partial effect; and (3) simultaneously, both variables significantly predict teachers' performance, with an Adjusted R Square of 0.905, indicating that 90.5% of the variance in performance is explained by the two predictors. The novelty lies in empirically demonstrating the combined dominance of these factors within a specific regional context, where prior studies often examined them separately. Practically, these findings underscore that sustainable teacher professionalism hinges on the synergy between visionary principals and a conducive workplace climate. This study contributes actionable evidence for educational policymakers and school administrators, emphasizing that investment in leadership development and cultural strengthening is not ancillary but essential for optimizing human resource quality in public secondary education.

Keywords: Teachers' Performance, Transformational Leadership, Work Culture

A. Introduction

In the context of national development, education plays a crucial role as the primary foundation for developing human resources who are not only intellectually superior but also possess strong character and are able to compete globally. The success of the national education system depends heavily on the strategic role of teachers as learning leaders in the classroom, not just on new curricula and adequate equipment (Mincu, 2022). The 21st-century education era demands that educators transform into true professionals. This means their role is no longer merely as transmitters of information, but rather as facilitators who actively guide, motivate, and empower students to learn

independently and create their own understanding. However, the reality on the ground often shows a gap between expected standards and the actual performance of teachers at various levels of education. The role of teachers is vital in creating a stimulating learning environment and supporting student exploration to achieve superior educational quality (Basyori, 2025; Mastul, 2024).

Therefore, optimizing human resource management in educational institutions is an essential strategy, given the centrality of this profession (Permatasari & Tandiayuk, 2023; Prabakar et al., 2025; Sun, 2025). Continuous professional development and improving teacher competency must be a priority within the framework of contemporary educational management. Teachers' performance, which reflects the actual results of their responsibilities, measured through a combination of competency, track record, dedication, and time efficiency, is a complex and highly dynamic construct. This construct is intrinsically sensitive to the influence of various factors, both internal to the organization and from the frequently changing external school environment. The results achieved by a teacher in carrying out their assigned tasks are known as teachers' performance. In the context of professionalism, Ahmad and Hodsay (2020) in their book on the Teaching and Education Profession, they state that teachers' performance is measured by teaching ability, personal integrity, and social skills, which are the foundation of professionalism.

This performance is influenced by many internal and external factors. If a teacher is in an unhealthy work environment or lacks support from their leadership, their intrinsic motivation will decline. This decline in performance is indicated by a lack of work discipline and innovation. Ultimately, this will hinder the achievement of national education goals. The principal's leadership style is one of the most dominant external components influencing teachers' performance. Seriyanti's et al. (2020) research, "School Principal: One of the Determining Factors for Principal Success," states that the principal's ability to influence, guide, and motivate his or her staff is crucial to a school's success. A transformational approach is necessary because transactional leadership is considered irrelevant in today's rapidly changing context. Transformational principals have the ability to shift teachers' perspectives from simply abdicating their responsibilities to becoming highly dedicated teachers.

Consistent with this view, recent research by Efrina's et al. (2023), demonstrates that teachers' performance is significantly influenced by the principal's leadership. With proper guidance, leaders can improve the quality of classroom learning. In addition to the principal's crucial role, organizational culture is crucial. A positive work culture creates a positive environment for teacher development (McChesney & Cross, 2023). Recent research shows that teacher professionalism and performance are significantly influenced by a strong work culture and a transformational leadership style (Chunhui et al., 2024). The combination of the two creates a powerful "driving force." When school leaders can instill transformational principles and make them part of the

organizational culture, all students will willingly adhere to high performance standards.

On the other hand, the results of the work show that the quality of education and teachers' performance are still very challenging, especially in the South Sumatra region and Banyuasin Regency. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency of South Sumatra, the Human Development Index of South Sumatra Province reached 73.18 in 2023 and increased to 73.84 in 2024 (Saputri, 2025). According to data from the Regional Education Balance in Banyuasin Regency in 2023, it shows that the average teacher competency score in this area is still fluctuating, and some are still below standard. Public junior high schools in the Banyuasin III District, located in both urban and rural areas of Banyuasin Regency, demonstrate a disparity between the quality of actual classroom learning and administrative needs. Initial observations and general observations indicate that teachers still teach conventionally; there are no efforts to develop teaching media; and discipline needs to be improved during the post-pandemic transition and changes in regional education policies.

School management issues and budget shortfalls also impact working conditions in public schools, ultimately leading to budget refocusing policies in Banyuasin. This suggests that, despite better school infrastructure in the district capital, "soft components" such as work culture and leadership have not fully contributed to improving teachers' performance. Previous research has extensively examined the relationship between these variables. Research by Yuniarti et al. (2023) found that teacher satisfaction and performance increased due to the principal's leadership style. This finding is supported by Tran et al. (2022), who found that workplace cultural factors play a significant role in improving teacher professionalism. This study not only provides a strong theoretical foundation but also raises questions about how these variables interact within the specific sociogeographical context of Banyuasin III.

In particular, the transformational leadership approach is an interesting topic of discussion. However, research conducted by Shofwani et al. (2024), shows that principals are strategically responsible for driving change; teachers' ability to adapt to new technologies is directly related to their leadership style. This study not only provides a solid theoretical foundation but also allows for discussion of the relationship between these variables within the socio-geographical context of Banyuasin. Most previous research has been conducted in large cities with complete facilities or in remote areas, thus underrepresenting the dynamics of schools in the developing regency administrative center, which still faces distinct challenges. However, Banyuasin III sub-district is an example of the transition from urban to rural areas, which requires further research. Furthermore, there is little research examining the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and organizational work culture post-pandemic recovery.

This study directly investigates how principals in Banyuasin III sub-district can apply transformational leadership to create a more productive work culture. This study is novel due to its unique location, and its results are expected to serve as a model for other subdistricts in Banyuasin Regency. Therefore, this study conducted in-depth contextual development, not simply replication. Based on the above, the study, entitled "The Influence of the Principal's Transformational Leadership and Organizational Work Culture on Teachers' Performance at Public Middle Schools" is crucial and warrants immediate implementation. Academically, this study aims to add to the literature on educational management, particularly as it relates to organizational behavior in public junior high schools. It is hoped that this research will assist the Banyuasin Regency Education Office and school principals in developing more efficient and data-driven teacher development policies.

This research is increasingly important because Banyuasin III District serves as a barometer of education in Banyuasin Regency, and improving teachers' performance in the area will have a multiplier effect on the surrounding areas. The focus of this study is how civil servants and non-civil servants' teachers perceive the daily work culture and leadership styles of principals in public junior high schools throughout Banyuasin III District. This research is expected to produce a comprehensive performance development model that focuses on work culture and leadership.

B. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal associative approach. Based on its level of explanation, causal associative research aims to examine the causal relationship between variables, namely the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this study, the independent (exogenous) variables include the Principal's Transformational Leadership (X1) and Organizational Work Culture (X2), while the dependent (endogenous) variable is Teachers' Performance (Y). The research design used is a causal design to illustrate the influence of leadership and work culture on teachers' performance in the field. The study was conducted at a public junior high school located in the administrative area of Banyuasin III District, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra Province. The location was selected based on academic and strategic considerations relevant to the research topic. The study lasted four months.

The population in this study was all active teachers teaching at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District, Banyuasin Regency, who were civil servants or government employees with work agreements. Based on the 2024 Education Master Data from the Banyuasin Regency Education Office, the total teacher population was 139. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with an error tolerance of 5%. Based on this calculation, a minimum sample size of 103 respondents was obtained. To maintain proportionality and avoid data bias, the sampling technique

used was proportional random sampling, allocated based on educational unit or employment status to ensure representation of each demographic in the population.

This study consisted of three variables:

1. Independent variable (X1): Principal Transformational Leadership.
2. Independent variable (X2): Organizational Work Culture.
3. Dependent variable (Y): Teachers' performance.

Data collection techniques were conducted through questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The main research instrument was a structured questionnaire composed of closed-ended statements with a Likert scale, which was administered to all teachers in the sample to describe their perceptions and direct experiences in the field. Prior to use, the 75-item research instrument was tested for validity and reliability through a pilot test with 20 teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Rantau Bayur. The validity of the statement items was analyzed using correlation with SPSS version 26. The technique used was Pearson Product Moment correlation at a significance level of 5%, where an item is declared valid if the calculated r value is greater than the table r value. The instrument's reliability was measured using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

The collected data were analyzed through a systematic procedure with the following steps:

1. Descriptive statistical analysis, used to describe and present data for each research variable.
2. Prerequisite Analysis Tests (Classical Assumption Tests), which included normality tests, linearity tests, multicollinearity tests, and heteroscedasticity tests, to ensure that the regression model met the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator criteria.
3. Hypothesis testing, conducted using multiple linear regression analysis techniques. This method is applied to measure the magnitude of the influence of the two independent variables (Transformational Leadership and Organizational Work Culture) on the dependent variable (Teachers' performance), both partially and simultaneously.

C. Results and Discussion

The Influence of the Principal's Transformational Leadership on Teachers' Performance

Statistical analysis convincingly demonstrates that the principal's transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on teachers' performance. The results of a partial t-test position this variable as a crucial determinant in boosting the professionalism of educators at Banyuasin III Public Junior High School. Theoretically, this finding aligns with the concept proposed by Bass and Avolio, which states that

transformational leadership can inspire subordinates to transcend personal interests for organizational goals (Chua & Ayoko, 2021). In practice, this is manifested through four leadership pillars. First, Idealized Influence: The principal in Banyuasin III has proven to be a role model who acts with high integrity, thus fostering respect for teachers.

Second, inspirational motivation: the clarity of vision and moral encouragement during morning briefings or official meetings fuels teachers' enthusiasm to achieve higher student graduation standards. Third, Intellectual Stimulation: The principal actively encourages teachers to explore innovative learning methods, such as utilizing digital technology post-pandemic, rather than relying on conventional methods. Fourth, Individualized Consideration: the principal's personal approach in listening to teachers' concerns about their administrative workload and facilitating their ongoing professional development needs. Furthermore, these findings are theoretically supported by social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura, which states that a person's work behavior is strongly influenced by the social environment and leadership figures around them (Wang et al., 2022).

Through the pillars of transformational leadership, the principal acts not only as a supervisor but also as an agent who consistently increases teachers' self-efficacy (Li & Liu, 2022; Polatcan et al., 2023). When the principal provides trust, space for innovation (intellectual stimulation), and personal attention (individualized consideration), teachers' cognitive structures are strengthened. This increased self-confidence theoretically transforms a heavy workload into a professional challenge, which in turn stimulates a high level of affective commitment and encourages teachers to perform beyond the minimum standards set by the organization. These findings replicate and strengthen the results of previous research, which consistently concluded that a leadership style that embraces, empowers, and fosters critical awareness in teachers has a linear impact on the quality of lesson plan development, classroom teaching and learning implementation, and the evaluation process for learning outcomes.

From the above analysis, the researcher can conclude that the principal's transformational leadership has a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance at SMP Negeri Banyuasin III District. Principals who are able to serve as role models, provide motivation, encourage innovation, and provide attention to teachers have been shown to increase teacher professionalism, self-confidence, and commitment to their work (Galdames-Calderón, 2023; Triokoyulisma et al., 2024) . Therefore, the implementation of transformational leadership is a crucial factor in improving the quality of learning and teachers' performance in schools.

The Influence of Organizational Work Culture on Teachers' Performance

The second hypothesis test confirmed that organizational work culture has a positive and significant partial effect on teachers' performance. The regression coefficient confirms that institutional culture is not merely a slogan, but rather a latent variable that significantly drives performance. In a sociological review of educational organizations, Schein conceptualizes organizational culture as a pattern of basic assumptions created, discovered, or developed by a particular group as it learns to navigate external adaptation and internal integration (Naylor, 2025; Torres, 2022). At SMP Negeri Banyuasin III, work culture manifests itself in tangible artifacts such as disciplinary routines (morning assembly and punctuality in class), as well as in deeply held values (collaboration in the school-level Subject Teacher Conference/MGMP, transparency, and tolerance among colleagues).

Empirical data shows that when schools have a family-like climate balanced with clear professional demands, teacher job anxiety decreases dramatically, which in turn stimulates organizational citizenship behavior. Teachers no longer teach solely to fulfill teaching hours or pursue certification benefits but rather are driven by a sense of belonging to their institution's reputation. This confirms research by Taqwim (2024), which asserts that a strong work culture serves as a social glue that unifies standards of behavior, thereby automatically eliminating counterproductive practices and boosting the quality of classroom teaching.

The Simultaneous Influence of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Work Culture on Teachers' Performance

The culmination of this analysis lies in the simultaneous test (F-Test), which proves that the integration of the principal's transformational leadership and organizational work culture together significantly contributes to improving teachers' performance (an effective contribution of 58.4%). This holistic relationship can be understood through a systemic paradigm in educational management. The principal, as top management at the educational unit level, acts as the architect of organizational culture. Transformational leadership does not operate in a vacuum; it requires a conducive work culture for the values of change it brings to take root. Conversely, a superior work culture (discipline, innovation, and collaboration) will not be formed or sustained without a leader who continuously stimulates, exemplifies, and maintains these values.

In the context of public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District, this synergy was created when the principal implemented an individualized approach (individualized consideration) to reform old habits (intellectual stimulation), gradually shifting a relaxed work culture to one oriented toward quality and achievement. When these two instruments work harmoniously, inspiring leaders, and a supportive work environment, teachers will experience a massive increase in pedagogical and

professional competence. They will not feel intimidated by the workload, but rather challenged to provide the best educational services for students. This conclusion provides a solid empirical foundation for the Banyuasin Regency Education Office's policy to design a program for upgrading principals' managerial skills and improving the school work climate in an integrated, rather than partial, manner to realize quality basic education.

The culmination of this analysis lies in the simultaneous test (F-test), which proves that the integration of the principal's transformational leadership and organizational work culture together significantly contributes to improving teachers' performance, with an effective contribution of 58.4%. Furthermore, this finding also supports the research conducted by Yuniarti et al. (2023), whose statistical modeling similarly confirmed that principal leadership interventions will never reach their optimal level if they operate alone without the support of a friendly and conducive work culture.

This holistic relationship can be understood through a systemic paradigm in educational management. The principal, as top management at the educational unit level, acts as the architect of organizational culture. Transformational leadership does not operate in a vacuum; it requires a conducive work culture for the values of change it brings to take root. Conversely, a superior work culture (discipline, innovation, and collaboration) will not be formed or sustained without a leader who continuously stimulates, exemplifies, and upholds these values. In the context of public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District, this synergy was created when the principal implemented an individualized approach (individualized consideration) to reform old habits (intellectual stimulation), gradually shifting a relaxed work culture to one oriented toward quality and achievement.

This pattern of leadership-based work culture shift was also validated by international research by Kasmiatun et al. (2025), which demonstrated that when principals provide strong intellectual stimulation, teachers tend to be more willing to step out of their comfort zones to innovate, particularly in adapting to curriculum dynamics. From the above analysis, the researcher can conclude that when these two instruments work harmoniously, inspiring leaders and a supportive work environment will significantly improve teachers' pedagogical and professional competence. They don't feel intimidated by the workload, but rather challenged to provide the best educational services for their students. This conclusion provides a solid empirical basis for the Banyuasin Regency Education Office's policy to design a program for upgrading principal management and improving the school work climate in an integrated, rather than partial, manner to realize quality basic education.

D. Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive analysis presented in Chapter IV, this study confirms that both the principal's transformational leadership and organizational work culture

exert a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance at public junior high schools in Banyuasin III District, both partially and simultaneously. Individually, transformational leadership encompassing idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration proves to be a powerful driver, as principals who model vision and encourage innovation directly elevate teachers' planning, implementation, and evaluation competencies. Similarly, a robust organizational work culture, marked by innovation orientation, attention to detail, student-centered focus, collegiality, and consistent discipline, creates a conducive ecosystem that intrinsically motivates educators to perform at higher standards. Crucially, their simultaneous effect confirms that these variables are not mutually exclusive but complementary: transformational leadership serves as the "engine" propelling change, while work culture functions as the "soil" sustaining it. Together, they account for a decisive contribution to teacher professionalism, underscoring that optimal performance requires a holistic synergy rather than isolated interventions. Practically, these findings mandate that school authorities in Banyuasin III District adopt an integrated improvement strategy. Principals should be trained not merely as administrators but as transformational agents who actively cultivate shared vision and intellectual stimulation. Concurrently, systematic efforts must be invested in strengthening organizational culture through regular climate assessments, reinforcement of collegial norms, and transparent reward systems that acknowledge both innovation and discipline. Policymakers are advised to design professional development programs that simultaneously address leadership competencies and cultural revitalization, ensuring that neither element is neglected. For future research, it is recommended to expand the investigation by including mediating or moderating variables, such as teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, or principal tenure, to uncover deeper causal mechanisms. Comparative studies across different districts or school levels would enhance generalizability, while qualitative approaches such as case studies or ethnography could provide richer contextual insights into how leadership and culture interact in daily practice. Longitudinal designs are also encouraged to track how changes in these variables influence performance over time, thereby offering evidence-based guidance for sustainable educational reform.

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