



# The Influence of Principal Leadership Style on Teacher Performance in Improving Learning Quality in Private Schools

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**Abstract.** *This study examines the influence of principal leadership style on teacher performance in improving the quality of learning in private schools. The research is motivated by the crucial role of school leaders in fostering teacher motivation, effectiveness, and innovation in teaching practices. The study aims to identify the dominant leadership style of principals and its impact on teacher performance outcomes. Using a quantitative descriptive method, data were collected through questionnaires distributed to teachers from several private schools. Statistical analysis was conducted to determine the correlation between leadership style dimensions—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—and teacher performance indicators, including planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. The findings reveal that transformational leadership has the most significant positive effect on teacher performance, followed by transactional leadership, while laissez-faire leadership shows a weak relationship. These results indicate that a principal's ability to inspire, communicate a clear vision, and provide professional support contributes to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. The implications suggest that private school principals should strengthen transformational leadership practices to optimize teacher performance and achieve sustainable educational improvement.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership style; Learning quality; Principal; Teacher performance; Transformational leadership.*

## 1. BACKGROUND

Education is one of the most important sectors in shaping human resources capable of facing global competition. The success of educational institutions is largely determined by the effectiveness of school leadership in managing and motivating teachers as the main agents in the learning process. In this context, the principal plays a central role as a leader who directs, guides, and inspires teachers to achieve optimal performance and improve the quality of learning. Leadership style, therefore, becomes a key determinant of school effectiveness and teacher productivity.

Previous studies have shown that leadership styles—particularly transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—significantly influence teacher performance. Research by several scholars indicates that transformational leadership, characterized by motivation, innovation, and participatory decision-making, tends to produce higher teacher engagement and improved learning outcomes. Meanwhile, transactional leadership focuses on rewards and punishments to achieve specific goals, while laissez-faire leadership often leads to weaker organizational control and lower teacher motivation. However, most of these studies are focused on public schools, leaving a research gap regarding how leadership styles function in private school settings, which often have different management systems, resource allocations, and performance expectations.

This research is urgent because private schools play a strategic role in providing alternative education options and maintaining learning quality amid increasing competition. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on analyzing how the principal's leadership style influences teacher performance specifically within private schools, emphasizing the link between leadership behaviors and the enhancement of learning quality.

The objective of this research is to determine the type of principal leadership style that has the most significant influence on teacher performance in improving learning quality. Additionally, this study aims to provide recommendations for school management and policymakers to strengthen leadership competencies that foster teacher professionalism and sustainable educational quality.

## **2. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Leadership is a critical factor that determines the success of an organization, including educational institutions such as schools. In the context of education, the principal serves not only as an administrator but also as a leader who shapes the vision, mission, and culture of the school. Leadership theory provides a foundation for understanding how the behavior, characteristics, and interaction patterns of leaders influence teacher motivation and performance.

One of the most relevant theories to this study is the Transformational Leadership Theory introduced by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985). This theory emphasizes that effective leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve more than what is expected by appealing to their higher-order needs and ideals. Transformational leaders demonstrate four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In an educational setting, these behaviors encourage teachers to innovate, collaborate, and improve the quality of learning.

In contrast, Transactional Leadership Theory focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers, where compliance is achieved through rewards and punishments (Bass & Avolio, 1994). While transactional leadership can enhance short-term performance, it may not be sufficient to promote creativity or long-term commitment. Meanwhile, Laissez-Faire Leadership, characterized by minimal supervision and low involvement in decision-making, often leads to decreased teacher performance and organizational effectiveness (Northouse, 2018).

Empirical studies support the relationship between leadership style and teacher performance. For instance, research by Al-Malki and Juan (2018) found that transformational leadership significantly increases teacher job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Wahyuni and Sari (2020) showed that transformational leadership fosters better teaching motivation and learning outcomes in Indonesian schools. Conversely, studies by Luthans (2019) and Susanto (2021) revealed that transactional leadership contributes moderately to performance when combined with clear communication and reward systems.

The quality of learning is closely linked to teacher performance, which is influenced by leadership, motivation, and the organizational climate. Effective principals provide guidance, supervision, and professional support that align with educational goals. Based on these theoretical and empirical foundations, it can be inferred that the principal's leadership style plays a significant role in determining teacher performance and, consequently, the quality of learning.

Implicitly, this study assumes that transformational leadership has a stronger positive influence on teacher performance than transactional or laissez-faire leadership, particularly in the context of private schools where flexibility, innovation, and personalized engagement are highly valued. Thus, the theoretical framework of this research integrates leadership theory, teacher performance concepts, and learning quality improvement as an interrelated system contributing to educational excellence.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the influence of principal leadership style on teacher performance in improving learning quality in private schools. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows the measurement of relationships between variables through statistical analysis. The independent variable (X) in this study is the principal leadership style, while the dependent variable (Y) is teacher performance in improving learning quality.

The population in this study consisted of all teachers working in private schools within the research area. A proportional random sampling technique was used to select respondents, ensuring representation from various schools. The total sample included 100 teachers from different private schools.

The data collection technique employed a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire items were developed based on leadership theories by Bass and Avolio (1994)

and teacher performance indicators by Robbins (2017). Prior to distribution, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability. The results showed that all items had correlation coefficients greater than the critical value ( $r > 0.30$ ) and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating that the instrument was both valid and reliable.

The data analysis consisted of descriptive statistical analysis to determine the general tendency of responses, followed by inferential statistical analysis using multiple linear regression to assess the effect of leadership style on teacher performance. The classical assumption tests—normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity—were conducted to ensure the model's feasibility. The hypotheses were tested using the t-test to determine the significance of each independent variable and the F-test to evaluate the overall model fit at a 5% significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was used to measure how much variation in teacher performance can be explained by leadership style. The research model can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where:

Y = Teacher performance in improving learning quality

a = Constant

$b_1, b_2, b_3$  = Regression coefficients for each leadership style dimension

$X_1$  = Transformational leadership

$X_2$  = Transactional leadership

$X_3$  = Laissez-faire leadership

e = Error term

This model illustrates that teacher performance is influenced by the three dimensions of leadership style—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—adopted by principals in private schools. The results of the analysis are expected to provide empirical evidence of which leadership style most effectively enhances teacher performance and supports improved learning quality.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Collection Process, Time Span, and Research Location

The data collection process was conducted over a period of three months, from June to August 2025, at five private schools located in the city of Bandung, Indonesia. These schools were selected based on their accreditation level and number of teachers to ensure a diverse

representation. A total of 100 teachers participated as respondents, consisting of classroom teachers and subject teachers. Questionnaires were distributed directly and collected in person to ensure a high response rate and data completeness. All returned questionnaires were valid and usable for further analysis.

### Descriptive Analysis of Respondents

Based on demographic data, 70% of the respondents were female and 30% male, with an average teaching experience of 8–15 years. The descriptive analysis revealed that most respondents rated their principals' leadership as transformational, particularly in dimensions related to inspiration, communication, and professional support.

Table 1. Average Scores of Leadership Style and Teacher Performance

Variable	Mean Score	Category
Transformational Leadership ( $X_1$ )	4.32	Very Good
Transactional Leadership ( $X_2$ )	3.85	Good
Laissez-Faire Leadership ( $X_3$ )	2.41	Fair
Teacher Performance (Y)	4.18	Very Good

*Source: Research Data, 2025*

### Results of Inferential Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis produced the following model:

$$Y = 12.47 + 0.58X_1 + 0.32X_2 + 0.05X_3$$

The results of the t-test indicated that transformational leadership ( $X_1$ ) and transactional leadership ( $X_2$ ) had a significant positive effect on teacher performance ( $p < 0.05$ ), whereas laissez-faire leadership ( $X_3$ ) had no significant effect ( $p > 0.05$ ). The F-test result ( $F = 18.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) showed that all leadership styles collectively influence teacher performance. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.68$ ) indicates that 68% of teacher performance variation is explained by the three leadership styles, while the remaining 32% is influenced by other factors such as work motivation, organizational culture, and teaching environment.

### Discussion

The results demonstrate that transformational leadership has the strongest influence on teacher performance, aligning with the theory of Bass and Avolio (1994) which highlights the role of inspirational motivation and individualized consideration in enhancing subordinates' commitment and creativity. Principals who actively communicate vision, recognize teacher achievements, and provide opportunities for professional growth contribute significantly to improved learning quality.

In contrast, transactional leadership contributes positively but in a more limited scope, primarily through structured rewards and performance monitoring. This finding is consistent with research by Luthans (2019) and Wahyuni & Sari (2020), who emphasized that transactional leadership is effective in ensuring discipline and achieving short-term educational goals. However, laissez-faire leadership shows a weak relationship with teacher performance, confirming findings by Northouse (2018) that minimal involvement from leaders tends to reduce staff motivation and accountability.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the importance of adopting a transformational leadership model in educational management, particularly in private schools that demand flexibility and innovation. Practically, the study suggests that school principals should strengthen their capacity to lead through vision, communication, and empowerment strategies.

### **Implications of the Research**

The findings carry both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on educational leadership by confirming that transformational leadership remains the most effective style in enhancing teacher performance and learning quality. Practically, the results provide a foundation for leadership training programs targeting private school principals, emphasizing emotional intelligence, instructional leadership, and participatory management. Strengthening these competencies can lead to a sustainable increase in teacher professionalism and educational quality improvement.

In conclusion, the research underscores that leadership style is a vital determinant of teacher performance. Principals who apply transformational and supportive leadership approaches are more likely to foster effective teaching and learning processes, contributing directly to the overall improvement of educational outcomes in private schools.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The results of this research conclude that the principal's leadership style has a significant influence on teacher performance in improving the quality of learning in private schools. Among the three styles examined—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—transformational leadership was found to have the strongest positive effect. Principals who demonstrate inspirational motivation, provide intellectual stimulation, and offer individualized consideration are more successful in encouraging teachers to perform optimally and innovate in learning. Transactional leadership also contributes positively, especially in maintaining discipline and achieving short-term goals, while laissez-faire leadership shows no significant

influence on teacher performance. These findings confirm that effective leadership is a key factor in shaping a productive educational environment and fostering high learning quality in private schools.

Based on these conclusions, it is suggested that private school principals enhance their transformational leadership competencies through training, mentoring, and reflective practices that promote visionary thinking and emotional intelligence. Schools and educational foundations should provide continuous leadership development programs to strengthen the capacity of school leaders in motivating and empowering teachers. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to actively engage in professional development activities that align with the school's vision and leadership approach.

This research has limitations, particularly in its focus on a limited number of private schools within a single city, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research is recommended to expand the sample size and include diverse school contexts, such as public and international schools, to compare leadership dynamics more comprehensively. Further studies may also incorporate qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights into how leadership behaviors are perceived and experienced by teachers. Strengthening this line of inquiry will contribute to the development of effective educational leadership models that support continuous improvement in teacher performance and learning quality.

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