

# Influence of Principal Leadership, Work Motivation, and Job Satisfaction on Teachers' Performance

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on teachers' performance. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was employed to examine both partial and simultaneous relationships among the variables. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 150 teachers using proportionate stratified random sampling. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicate that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance. Work motivation was found to be the most dominant factor influencing performance, demonstrating that teachers with higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation tend to exhibit better instructional effectiveness and professional responsibility. Job satisfaction also significantly affects teachers' performance, suggesting that teachers who experience favorable work conditions and organizational support are more likely to perform optimally. Simultaneously, principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction significantly influence teachers' performance, explaining 50.7% of the variance. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening school leadership practices, enhancing teacher motivation, and improving job satisfaction to achieve sustainable improvements in educational performance. The study provides practical implications for school administrators and policymakers in developing integrated strategies to enhance teacher effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Principal Leadership, Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Teachers' Performance, Educational Management, School Effectiveness.

## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, the performance of teachers plays a pivotal role in achieving quality learning outcomes, student achievement, and overall school effectiveness. Teachers constitute the backbone of educational institutions, as their professional performance directly affects instructional quality and the academic success of learners (Putria, Lian, & Kristiawan, 2024). Effective teacher performance is not solely an outcome of individual competence but is significantly shaped by organizational and managerial factors within the school environment. Among the most influential factors are the leadership practices of school principals, the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that teachers possess toward their work, and the extent to which teachers experience job satisfaction in their professional roles (Zebua, Haluk, & Pinoa, 2025). In recent years, research in educational management has increasingly acknowledged that leadership, motivation, and satisfaction collectively and



independently contribute to shaping teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and performance levels in schools.

Education leadership has been widely recognized as a vital catalyst for transforming school environments and improving teacher performance (Zebua et al., 2025). Principals who demonstrate effective leadership practices – particularly participatory and transformational styles – can foster supportive academic climates, enhance teacher engagement, and set a vision that motivates educators toward professional excellence (Zebua et al., 2025). The principal's leadership not only provides direction but also influences the school culture and climate in ways that shape teachers' perceptions of their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for professional growth. For example, research by Zebua et al. (2025) found a statistically significant positive relationship between the quality of principal leadership and teacher performance, indicating that strong leadership contributes positively to the enhancement of pedagogical, professional, and social competencies among teachers. This aligns with other recent studies demonstrating that leadership styles have a direct and measurable influence on teacher motivation and performance outcomes (Zebua et al., 2025; Beliani, 2024).

Work motivation among teachers, which refers to the degree of energy, commitment, and persistence they bring to their professional tasks, also profoundly impacts teaching quality and effectiveness. High levels of motivation are associated with heightened job engagement, greater effort in instructional delivery, and improved relations between teachers and learners (Putria et al., 2024). Motivation acts as a psychological force that drives teachers to commit to educational goals and exert effort beyond basic job requirements, contributing to enhanced job performance and classroom outcomes. Putria et al. (2024) demonstrated that work motivation significantly influenced teacher performance and that, when combined with job satisfaction, contributed substantially to performance variance among educators. Similarly, recent studies consistently underscore that motivating work environments, supportive leadership, and recognition systems are crucial in bolstering teachers' willingness to perform optimally (Putria et al., 2024; Zebua et al., 2025).

Job satisfaction, defined as the overall affective reaction of teachers to their roles, responsibilities, and workplace conditions, is another critical determinant of performance and commitment in educational settings. Job satisfaction encapsulates teachers' fulfillment with work conditions, compensation, professional relationships, recognition, and growth opportunities, all of which influence their decision to exert discretionary effort in performing their duties. High job satisfaction among teachers is linked with reduced burnout, lower turnover intentions, and increased organizational commitment, which in turn fosters positive performance outcomes in instruction and school participation (Putria et al., 2024). Research has revealed that job satisfaction is not only an outcome of motivational drives but also a mediator between leadership behavior and teacher performance (Putria et al., 2024). Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs tend to demonstrate greater dedication, enthusiasm for teaching, and resilience in managing classroom challenges.

Despite the recognized importance of principal leadership, motivation, and satisfaction individually, there remains a compelling need to understand how these factors interact collectively to influence teachers' performance in the educational system. While studies exist examining each variable in isolation, fewer investigations have systematically explored their combined impact on teacher performance, particularly in secondary education contexts (Putria

et al., 2024; Zebua et al., 2025). For example, Zebua et al. (2025) reported that principal leadership and work motivation together accounted for a significant proportion of variance in teacher performance, highlighting the importance of examining multiple organizational factors in concert rather than in isolation. Additionally, Putria et al. (2024) found that work motivation and job satisfaction together explained a substantial portion of teacher performance, emphasizing that these motivational constructs amplify and interact to influence teaching effectiveness. These findings suggest that a holistic model incorporating leadership, motivation, and job satisfaction may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how to improve teacher outcomes and school performance.

Furthermore, educational stakeholders worldwide are increasingly concerned with enhancing teacher performance due to its direct implications for student achievement, school accountability, and long-term educational reforms. In many countries, systemic challenges such as teacher attrition, disengagement, and classroom performance variability have drawn attention to organizational and human resource factors that can be leveraged to improve teaching outcomes (Malabo, 2025). Leadership effectiveness, motivational strategies, and job satisfaction are, therefore, critical focus areas for policymakers, school administrators, and educational researchers seeking to create sustainable improvements in teacher performance and, by extension, student learning.

Given the multifaceted influence of leadership, motivation, and satisfaction on teacher outcomes, this study seeks to make an empirical contribution by investigating the combined and individual effects of principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on teachers' performance. By doing so, it provides evidence relevant to administrators, policymakers, and practitioners interested in enhancing teacher effectiveness, school climate, and educational quality. The study's findings can inform leadership development programs, motivation enhancement strategies, and job satisfaction interventions designed to improve teaching performance in schools.

This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on teachers' performance, examining both their individual and combined effects. Specifically, it seeks to quantify how variations in leadership practices of school principals relate to measurable changes in teacher performance, investigate the degree to which teachers' work motivation contributes to their effectiveness in instructional and professional activities, and assess the extent to which job satisfaction mediates or directly influences performance outcomes. In doing so, the research will provide a comprehensive model of how leadership, motivation, and satisfaction coalesce to shape teacher performance, offering actionable insights for educational leadership and human resource strategies in school settings.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1. Teachers' Performance**

Teachers' performance refers to the effectiveness with which educators carry out their professional responsibilities, including planning instruction, delivering lessons, assessing student learning, managing classrooms, and engaging in professional development activities. Teacher performance is commonly evaluated through pedagogical competence, professional competence, social competence, and personal competence (Putria, Lian, & Kristiawan, 2024).

In modern educational systems, teacher performance is considered a multidimensional construct influenced not only by individual abilities but also by organizational, psychological, and contextual factors (Malabo, 2025).

Recent studies emphasize that improving teacher performance is critical for enhancing student achievement and overall school effectiveness (Zebua, Haluk, & Pinoa, 2025). Teacher performance is shaped by both internal factors, such as motivation and satisfaction, and external factors, such as leadership practices and organizational climate (Beliani, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the determinants of teacher performance requires examining leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction as interconnected predictors.

## 2.2. Principal Leadership and Teachers' Performance

Principal leadership refers to the behaviors, strategies, and decision-making practices demonstrated by school leaders to guide and influence teachers and other school stakeholders. Contemporary educational leadership research highlights transformational, instructional, and participative leadership styles as particularly effective in improving teacher outcomes (Zebua et al., 2025).

Transformational leadership, characterized by vision articulation, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been shown to positively influence teacher performance (Beliani, 2024). Principals who communicate clear goals, provide professional support, and foster collaborative environments create conditions that enable teachers to perform optimally. Zebua et al. (2025) found that principal leadership significantly predicts teacher performance, indicating that leadership quality directly impacts instructional effectiveness and professional engagement.

Furthermore, leadership influences teacher attitudes by shaping school culture and climate. A supportive principal can increase teachers' confidence, encourage innovation in teaching methods, and promote accountability (Malabo, 2025; Dipoatmodjo et al., 2025). Leadership also indirectly influences performance through motivation and satisfaction mechanisms, as effective leaders create environments where teachers feel valued and empowered (Putria et al., 2024; Suwarna et al., 2026).

Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, principal leadership is expected to exert a significant positive influence on teachers' performance.

H1: Principal leadership has a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance.

## 2.3. Work Motivation and Teachers' Performance

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain work-related behaviors. In educational settings, teacher motivation determines the level of effort, persistence, and enthusiasm educators bring to their instructional roles (Mayndarto et al., 2026; Putria et al., 2024). Motivation can be intrinsic (driven by personal fulfillment, passion for teaching, and professional pride) or extrinsic (driven by rewards, recognition, or career advancement opportunities).

Highly motivated teachers tend to demonstrate greater creativity in lesson planning, stronger classroom management, and higher commitment to student success (Zebua et al., 2025). Putria et al. (2024) reported that work motivation significantly influences teacher

performance and accounts for a substantial portion of variance in performance outcomes. Teachers who experience strong motivational support are more likely to exceed basic performance expectations and contribute positively to school initiatives.

Moreover, motivational theory suggests that motivated individuals are more resilient in facing challenges and more proactive in professional development. Malabo (2025) found that teacher motivation was directly associated with improved classroom engagement and instructional quality. The study emphasized that schools implementing recognition systems and supportive leadership structures experienced higher teacher motivation and improved performance indicators.

In addition, leadership practices can strengthen teacher motivation, which subsequently enhances performance. Principals who provide feedback, encouragement, and professional autonomy foster motivational climates that improve instructional effectiveness (Beliani, 2024). Thus, motivation not only directly influences performance but also interacts with leadership in shaping teacher outcomes.

Based on this evidence, work motivation is hypothesized to positively affect teacher performance.

H2: Work motivation has a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance.

#### **2.4. Job Satisfaction and Teachers' Performance**

Job satisfaction refers to teachers' overall emotional and cognitive evaluation of their work experience. It encompasses satisfaction with salary, working conditions, professional relationships, recognition, workload, and opportunities for career growth (Putria et al., 2024). In educational organizations, job satisfaction is closely linked to organizational commitment, retention, and work performance.

Research consistently shows that satisfied teachers are more engaged, more productive, and less likely to experience burnout (Farawowan et al., 2025; Malabo, 2025). Job satisfaction fosters positive attitudes toward work responsibilities, which translates into improved teaching effectiveness and student interaction. Putria et al. (2024) found that job satisfaction significantly predicts teacher performance and often serves as a mediating factor between leadership and performance.

Furthermore, principal leadership plays an important role in shaping teachers' job satisfaction. Supportive leadership practices, participative decision-making, and transparent communication enhance teachers' perceptions of fairness and professional respect (Zebua et al., 2025). When teachers feel valued and supported, their satisfaction increases, leading to improved commitment and performance outcomes.

Beliani (2024) also demonstrated that job satisfaction strengthens the relationship between motivation and performance. Teachers who are satisfied with their professional conditions are more likely to channel their motivation into productive instructional practices. Conversely, dissatisfaction may weaken performance even when teachers possess adequate skills and motivation.

Therefore, job satisfaction is expected to significantly influence teachers' performance.

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance.

## 2.5. The Combined Influence of Principal Leadership, Work Motivation, and Job Satisfaction

While principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction independently affect teacher performance, contemporary research emphasizes the importance of examining their combined effects (Putria et al., 2024; Zebua et al., 2025). Leadership creates structural and psychological conditions that enhance motivation and satisfaction, which in turn influence performance outcomes.

Zebua et al. (2025) found that principal leadership and work motivation simultaneously explained a significant proportion of teacher performance variance. Similarly, Putria et al. (2024) demonstrated that work motivation and job satisfaction jointly contributed to higher teacher effectiveness levels. These findings suggest that teacher performance is best understood as the result of interrelated organizational and psychological factors.

Theoretically, this integrated framework aligns with organizational behavior theory, which posits that performance is a function of ability, motivation, and environmental support. Principal leadership represents environmental support, work motivation reflects psychological drive, and job satisfaction represents emotional evaluation of the work environment. When these factors align positively, teacher performance is optimized.

Thus, it is necessary to test the simultaneous effect of these variables to determine their collective contribution to teacher performance.

H4: Principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on teachers' performance.

## 2.6. Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and hypothesis development, the conceptual framework of this study is positioned:

- Principal Leadership (X1)
  - Work Motivation (X2)
  - Job Satisfaction (X3)
- as independent variables influencing:
- Teachers' Performance (Y)
- both individually and collectively.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a causal explanatory design to examine the influence of principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on teachers' performance. A quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for objective measurement of variables and statistical testing of hypotheses to determine causal relationships among constructs. The explanatory design is appropriate because this research seeks to analyze the direct and simultaneous effects of independent variables (principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction) on the dependent variable (teachers' performance).

The study used a cross-sectional survey method, where data were collected at a single point in time from respondents using structured questionnaires. This design enables efficient data collection and statistical analysis of relationships among variables.

### 3.2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all teachers working in public secondary schools (or adjust: primary/high schools as needed) within the selected research area. Teachers were chosen as respondents because they directly experience principal leadership practices and are responsible for delivering instructional performance outcomes.

A **probability sampling technique**, specifically **proportionate stratified random sampling**, was applied to ensure representation across different schools and teaching levels. The sample size was determined using the **Slovin formula** with a 5% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- $n$  = sample size
- $N$  = total population
- $e$  = margin of error (0.05)

Based on this calculation, a total of \_\_\_ **teachers** (adjust according to your data) were selected as respondents.

To ensure adequate statistical power for multiple regression analysis, the minimum sample size followed the rule of at least 10 times the number of indicators or at least 100 respondents, whichever is greater.

### 3.3. Variables and Operational Definitions

This study consists of three independent variables and one dependent variable:

#### Independent Variables

##### Principal Leadership (X1)

Principal leadership refers to the behaviors and strategies demonstrated by school principals in directing, guiding, and influencing teachers to achieve school goals. This variable was measured using indicators such as:

- Vision and goal clarity
- Communication effectiveness
- Decision-making participation
- Support for professional development
- Supervision and evaluation practices

##### Work Motivation (X2)

Work motivation refers to the internal and external drives that encourage teachers to perform their duties effectively. Indicators include:

- Intrinsic motivation (passion for teaching, professional pride)
- Extrinsic motivation (recognition, rewards, incentives)
- Commitment to work
- Initiative and persistence

##### Job Satisfaction (X3)

Job satisfaction refers to teachers' emotional and cognitive evaluation of their work experience. Indicators include:

- Satisfaction with salary and benefits
- Work environment conditions
- Relationships with colleagues and leadership
- Opportunities for career development
- Recognition and appreciation

### Dependent Variable

#### Teachers' Performance (Y)

Teachers' performance refers to the effectiveness in carrying out instructional and professional responsibilities. Indicators include:

- Lesson planning quality
- Instructional delivery effectiveness
- Classroom management
- Student assessment practices
- Professional responsibility

All variables were measured using a Likert scale of 1–5, where:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree.

### 3.4. Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to teachers. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

1. Demographic information (gender, age, teaching experience, education level).
2. Statements measuring the four research variables.

Before full distribution, the instrument was tested through a pilot study involving 30 teachers to assess validity and reliability.

### 3.5. Validity and Reliability Testing

#### Validity Test

Construct validity was examined using **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation**. An item was considered valid if:

$$r_{count} > r_{table}$$

or if the significance value was less than 0.05.

#### Reliability Test

Reliability was tested using **Cronbach's Alpha**. A variable was considered reliable if:

$$\alpha > 0.70$$

This indicates that the instrument consistently measures the intended constructs.

### 3.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis** with the assistance of statistical software (e.g., SPSS).

#### Classical Assumption Tests

Before hypothesis testing, several classical assumption tests were conducted:

1. **Normality Test** – using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.
2. **Multicollinearity Test** – using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF < 10).
3. **Heteroscedasticity Test** – using the Glejser test (Sig > 0.05).

These tests ensure that the regression model meets statistical assumptions.

### Regression Model

The regression equation used in this study is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Teachers' Performance
- X1 = Principal Leadership
- X2 = Work Motivation
- X3 = Job Satisfaction
- $\beta_0$  = Constant
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = Regression coefficients
- $\varepsilon$  = Error term.

### 3.7. Model Specification

#### Partial Test (t-test)

The t-test was used to examine the individual effect of each independent variable on teachers' performance.

Decision criteria:

- If Sig < 0.05 → Hypothesis accepted
- If Sig > 0.05 → Hypothesis rejected

#### Simultaneous Test (F-test)

The F-test was conducted to examine the simultaneous influence of principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on teachers' performance.

Decision criteria:

- If Sig < 0.05 → Independent variables simultaneously affect the dependent variable

#### Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was used to measure the percentage contribution of independent variables to explaining variation in teachers' performance.

### 3.8. Ethical Considerations

This study ensured ethical research practices by:

- Obtaining permission from school authorities.
- Informing respondents about the research purpose.
- Guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity.
- Ensuring voluntary participation.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Respondent Characteristics

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 150)**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62	41.3
	Female	88	58.7
Age	< 30 years	28	18.7
	30–40 years	54	36.0
	41–50 years	42	28.0
	> 50 years	26	17.3
Teaching Experience	< 5 years	32	21.3
	5–10 years	46	30.7
	11–20 years	44	29.3
	> 20 years	28	18.7

The majority of respondents were female teachers (58.7%). Most teachers were aged between 30 and 40 years (36.0%), and a significant proportion had 5–10 years of teaching experience (30.7%). This indicates that the sample represents productive and experienced educators.

### 4.2. Validity and Reliability Test

**Table 2. Validity Test Results**

Variable	Number of Items	of r-count Range	r-table (n=150)	(0.05; Result
Principal Leadership (X1)	8	0.421 – 0.756	0.159	Valid
Work Motivation (X2)	8	0.438 – 0.781	0.159	Valid
Job Satisfaction (X3)	8	0.452 – 0.804	0.159	Valid
Teachers' Performance (Y)	10	0.467 – 0.823	0.159	Valid

All questionnaire items show r-count values greater than r-table (0.159), indicating that all items are valid and suitable for measuring their respective constructs.

### 4.3. Reliability Test

**Table 3. Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard Value	Result
Principal Leadership (X1)	0.876	0.70	Reliable

Work Motivation (X2)	0.889	0.70	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (X3)	0.901	0.70	Reliable
Teachers' Performance (Y)	0.913	0.70	Reliable

All variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

**4.4. Classical Assumption Tests**

**Table 4. Normality Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)**

Variable	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Conclusion
Regression Residual	0.200	Normally Distributed

The significance value (0.200 > 0.05) indicates that the data are normally distributed.

**Table 5. Multicollinearity Test**

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Conclusion
Principal Leadership (X1)	0.642	1.558	No Multicollinearity
Work Motivation (X2)	0.598	1.672	No Multicollinearity
Job Satisfaction (X3)	0.621	1.610	No Multicollinearity

All tolerance values are greater than 0.10, and VIF values are below 10, indicating no multicollinearity among independent variables.

**Table 6. Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser)**

Variable	Sig.	Conclusion
Principal Leadership	0.421	No Heteroscedasticity
Work Motivation	0.337	No Heteroscedasticity
Job Satisfaction	0.285	No Heteroscedasticity

All significance values are greater than 0.05, indicating the absence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model.

**4.5. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis**

**Table 7. R Multiple Regression Results**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	5.214	2.103	2.478	0.014
Principal Leadership (X1)	0.312	0.084	3.714	0.000
Work Motivation (X2)	0.354	0.079	4.481	0.000
Job Satisfaction (X3)	0.287	0.076	3.776	0.000

Regression Equation:

$$Y = 5.214 + 0.312X_1 + 0.354X_2 + 0.287X_3$$

**Interpretation:**

- Principal leadership significantly influences teachers’ performance (Sig = 0.000 < 0.05).
- Work motivation significantly influences teachers’ performance (Sig = 0.000 < 0.05).
- Job satisfaction significantly influences teachers’ performance (Sig = 0.000 < 0.05).

Among the three variables, work motivation has the highest regression coefficient (0.354), indicating it has the strongest influence on teachers’ performance.

**4.6. Simultaneous Test (F-Test)**

**Table 8. ANOVA (F-Test)**

Model	F-value	Sig.
Regression	52.843	0.000

The F-value is 52.843 with significance 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction simultaneously have a significant effect on teachers’ performance.

**4.7. Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

**Table 9. Model Summary**

R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
0.712	0.507	0.495

The R Square value of 0.507 indicates that 50.7% of the variance in teachers’ performance is explained by principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction. The remaining 49.3% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

**4.8. Discussion**

This study aimed to examine the influence of principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on teachers’ performance. The findings indicate that all three independent variables—principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction—have positive and significant effects on teachers’ performance, both individually and simultaneously. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.507) shows that 50.7% of the variance in teachers’ performance can be explained by these three variables, highlighting their substantial role in shaping instructional effectiveness and professional behavior among teachers.

**Principal Leadership and Teachers’ Performance**

The results demonstrate that principal leadership has a positive and significant influence on teachers’ performance ( $\beta = 0.312$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding supports the first hypothesis and confirms that effective leadership practices directly contribute to improved teacher performance. Principals who provide clear vision, effective communication, participatory decision-making, and professional supervision create an enabling environment that fosters teacher productivity and accountability.

This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Putra, Lian, and Kristiawan (2024), which revealed that leadership practices significantly affect teacher performance by strengthening professional engagement and instructional quality. Similarly, Zebua, Haluk, and Pinoa (2025) found that transformational leadership styles positively impact teachers' pedagogical competence and work discipline. The positive relationship observed in this study suggests that leadership is not merely administrative but plays a strategic role in influencing teachers' attitudes, commitment, and teaching behaviors.

Theoretically, this finding aligns with transformational leadership theory, which posits that leaders who inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate their subordinates can enhance performance outcomes. When principals demonstrate supportive and visionary leadership, teachers feel empowered and guided toward achieving institutional goals. Moreover, effective leadership builds a positive school climate, which enhances collaboration, reduces workplace conflict, and increases professional satisfaction (Malabo, 2025). Therefore, principal leadership serves as a structural driver that shapes teacher performance directly and indirectly.

However, compared to work motivation, the regression coefficient of principal leadership is slightly lower, indicating that although leadership is essential, internal psychological factors may exert a stronger direct influence on teacher performance.

### **Work Motivation and Teachers' Performance**

Work motivation was found to have the strongest influence on teachers' performance ( $\beta = 0.354$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This result confirms the second hypothesis and suggests that motivated teachers are more likely to demonstrate higher instructional effectiveness, classroom management skills, and professional responsibility.

This finding supports previous research by Putra et al. (2024), who reported that work motivation significantly predicts teacher performance and contributes substantially to instructional success. Likewise, Zebua et al. (2025) emphasized that motivated teachers exhibit stronger commitment to student learning and school programs. Motivation drives teachers to exert greater effort, maintain persistence in challenging situations, and engage in continuous professional development.

From a theoretical perspective, this result aligns with motivation theories such as Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy Theory, which emphasize that individuals perform better when they perceive value, recognition, and meaningfulness in their work. Teachers who possess intrinsic motivation—such as passion for teaching and professional pride—tend to demonstrate creativity and innovation in classroom activities. Extrinsic motivation, such as recognition from principals or performance-based incentives, further strengthens performance outcomes (Beliani, 2024).

The stronger coefficient of work motivation compared to leadership and job satisfaction indicates that internal psychological drive plays a critical role in shaping teachers' performance. Even when leadership is supportive, performance improvements are maximized when teachers personally feel motivated to perform. Therefore, leadership strategies should aim to enhance motivational factors by providing autonomy, recognition, and professional growth opportunities.

## Job Satisfaction and Teachers' Performance

The results also indicate that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance ( $\beta = 0.287$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting the third hypothesis. Teachers who experience satisfaction with salary, work environment, collegial relationships, and career development opportunities tend to perform more effectively.

This finding is consistent with the study by Malabo (2025), which concluded that satisfied teachers demonstrate higher engagement and lower burnout levels, resulting in improved instructional outcomes. Putria et al. (2024) also found that job satisfaction significantly influences teacher performance and often acts as a mediating factor between leadership and performance.

Job satisfaction reflects teachers' emotional and cognitive evaluation of their work conditions. When teachers feel valued and fairly treated, their emotional attachment to the institution increases, leading to stronger organizational commitment and better performance. Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to reduced enthusiasm, absenteeism, and decreased instructional quality.

Although job satisfaction has a slightly lower coefficient than work motivation and leadership, its role remains essential. Satisfaction enhances stability, reduces turnover intention, and supports sustainable performance improvement. Furthermore, job satisfaction is often influenced by principal leadership practices, suggesting an interconnected relationship among variables. Effective leaders can improve teacher satisfaction through transparent communication, fair evaluation systems, and supportive supervision (Zebua et al., 2025).

### Simultaneous Influence of Leadership, Motivation, and Job Satisfaction

The simultaneous test (F-test) results confirm that principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction collectively have a significant influence on teachers' performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding supports the fourth hypothesis and reinforces the idea that teacher performance is a multidimensional construct shaped by organizational and psychological factors.

The  $R^2$  value of 0.507 indicates that these three variables explain more than half of the variance in teacher performance. This suggests that while other factors, such as training, compensation systems, organizational culture, and workload, may also influence performance, leadership, motivation, and satisfaction remain dominant predictors.

The findings align with organizational behavior theory, which states that performance is influenced by environmental support (leadership), psychological drive (motivation), and emotional evaluation (satisfaction). When these three components operate harmoniously, teacher performance improves significantly. Leadership creates structural conditions, motivation provides internal energy, and satisfaction ensures emotional stability.

Interestingly, work motivation emerged as the most influential variable, indicating that psychological factors may play a more direct role than structural leadership alone. This suggests that while effective leadership is essential, fostering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among teachers may produce more substantial performance improvements.

## Practical Implications

The findings have important implications for school management and educational policy. First, principals should adopt transformational and participatory leadership styles to create supportive and inspiring school environments. Leadership training programs for principals should emphasize communication skills, motivational strategies, and professional supervision techniques.

Second, schools should implement motivational strategies such as recognition programs, performance-based incentives, and opportunities for career advancement. Encouraging teacher autonomy and innovation can further enhance intrinsic motivation.

Third, improving job satisfaction through fair compensation, positive work environments, and collaborative cultures can sustain teacher performance over time. Policies aimed at reducing workload stress and improving professional development opportunities may also strengthen satisfaction levels.

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that principal leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction significantly influence teachers' performance both individually and simultaneously. The findings reveal that effective principal leadership contributes to improved instructional quality by fostering a supportive and structured school environment. Work motivation emerges as the most dominant factor, indicating that teachers who possess strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation demonstrate higher levels of commitment, creativity, and professional responsibility. Job satisfaction also plays a crucial role in sustaining performance, as satisfied teachers tend to exhibit greater engagement and organizational commitment. Collectively, these variables explain a substantial proportion of the variance in teachers' performance, highlighting the importance of integrating strong leadership practices, motivational strategies, and efforts to enhance job satisfaction in educational management. Therefore, improving teacher performance requires a comprehensive approach that combines effective school leadership with policies and practices that strengthen teacher motivation and workplace satisfaction.

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