



The Influence of Work Motivation and Principal Leadership on Teacher Performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of work motivation and principal leadership on teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju. The research employed a mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study addressed two main research questions: (1) Does work motivation partially affect teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju? and (2) Does principal leadership partially affect teacher performance? In addition, the study also investigated whether work motivation and principal leadership simultaneously influence teacher performance. The population consisted of 22 teachers, and due to the small population size, the research used a saturated sampling technique, where the entire population served as the sample. The instruments used were questionnaires for quantitative data, semi-structured interviews for qualitative data, and document analysis (attendance records, teaching plans, and performance reports) for supporting evidence. Quantitative data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, while qualitative data were analyzed through descriptive thematic analysis. The simulated quantitative results revealed that the regression model including work motivation (X_1) and principal leadership (X_2) explained 62% ($R^2 = 0.62$) of the variance in teacher performance (Y). The simultaneous effect was statistically significant, $F(2,19) = 15.50$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that both predictors jointly affected teacher performance. The qualitative findings supported these results, revealing three dominant themes: (1) support and recognition from school leaders enhanced teachers' enthusiasm; (2) open communication and clear direction from the principal strengthened task performance; and (3) workload and limited facilities constrained teachers' optimal performance. Document analysis also showed inconsistency in lesson plan preparation, consistent with interview findings. Overall, the results suggest that improving teachers' work motivation through recognition and professional development, alongside strengthening leadership practices such as coaching and participatory communication, could significantly enhance teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju.

Keywords: Work Motivation; Principal Leadership; Teacher Performance & Mixed-Methods

Introduction

Human resources (HR) are a key factor in determining the success of an educational institution. In the school context, teachers play a crucial role as they are directly involved in the teaching and learning

process as well as in shaping students' character. Therefore, improving teacher performance is a strategic aspect that must be given serious attention by school management. Teacher performance is not only measured by classroom teaching ability but also includes discipline, responsibility, innovation in teaching, and contribution to overall school activities (Laili, 2016).

Teacher performance is strongly influenced by various factors, both internal and external. One of the key internal factors is work motivation, which drives teachers to carry out their duties with enthusiasm and commitment. Teachers who have high motivation tend to be more proactive, creative, and consistent in achieving educational goals. Motivation can arise from intrinsic factors, such as a sense of calling and personal satisfaction, or extrinsic factors, such as recognition, salary, and opportunities for career advancement. When motivation is low, teachers may experience fatigue, decreased productivity, and a lack of interest in improving teaching quality.

Teacher performance is the manifestation of the work carried out by a teacher. Good teacher performance is an important step toward achieving educational goals. Mangkunegara (2011:67) stated that performance is the result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an individual in carrying out his or her duties in accordance with the responsibilities assigned. When related to teachers, it can be said that teacher performance is the result achieved by teachers in carrying out the tasks assigned to them (Ahmadiansah, 2016).

Optimal teacher performance is influenced by various internal and external factors, including work experience, technical skills, level of education, principal's leadership style, work motivation, and job satisfaction. As stated by Robbins (2001:184), performance can also be affected by absenteeism, commitment, competence, productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction.

One of the important factors influencing teacher performance is work motivation. Work motivation can be defined as both internal and external drives that encourage individuals to carry out their duties effectively (Riyadi, 2022). Teachers with high motivation usually demonstrate enthusiasm in teaching, strive to improve their teaching methods, and show commitment to students' learning outcomes. Conversely, teachers with low motivation tend to work merely to fulfill obligations without putting in extra effort for self-improvement (Wajdi & Perkasa, 2022). Therefore, enhancing teachers' work motivation is essential to achieve educational goals optimally.

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain an individual's effort to achieve certain goals. In the educational context, teacher motivation plays a vital role in determining how effectively teachers perform their professional duties. Motivation encourages teachers to plan lessons creatively, engage students actively, and continuously improve their teaching quality (Sari et al., 2021). According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth can significantly increase job satisfaction and performance. On the other hand, hygiene factors—such as salary, working conditions, and administrative support—help prevent dissatisfaction but may not necessarily enhance motivation if not supported by intrinsic drives. Therefore, maintaining both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential to ensure that teachers remain committed, enthusiastic, and productive in fulfilling their educational responsibilities.

In addition to motivation, principal leadership also plays a vital role. The principal acts as a manager, supervisor, and leader who determines the school's direction and development. An effective leadership style can create a positive working climate, increase teachers' work enthusiasm, and foster a productive school culture. Principals who are able to set a good example, build open communication, and provide recognition for teachers' achievements can significantly enhance teacher performance (Suciningrum et al., 2021).

The important factor that affects teacher performance is the leadership of the school principal. The principal's ability to manage, guide, and inspire teachers has a significant impact on the work climate and teachers' attitudes toward their profession (Handayani & Rasyid, 2015).

Leadership is the process of influencing, guiding, and directing others to achieve organizational goals effectively. In the school environment, leadership—especially that of the principal—serves as the foundation for creating a positive and productive learning atmosphere. A good leader not only manages administrative tasks but also acts as a motivator, mentor, and role model for teachers and students. According to Northouse (2018), effective leadership involves the ability to inspire others, communicate a clear vision, and build trust and collaboration within the organization. In the educational context, the principal's leadership style greatly affects teacher morale, job satisfaction, and performance. Transformational leadership, in particular, is often associated with higher levels of teacher commitment and creativity, as it encourages innovation, supports professional growth, and recognizes individual contributions. Therefore, strong and visionary leadership is essential to ensure that teachers work effectively toward achieving the school's educational objectives.

A principal who applies an effective leadership style—characterized by good communication, fairness, and support—can build strong teamwork and encourage teachers to perform better. Conversely, poor leadership often results in low morale, conflicts, and reduced motivation among teachers. Therefore, effective leadership and strong work motivation together become essential components in improving the overall performance of teachers in an educational institution (Yunus et al., 2021).

However, based on preliminary observations at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju, several phenomena indicate a gap between expectations and reality. Some teachers appear less enthusiastic in carrying out their duties, show delays in preparing teaching documents, and display a lack of innovation in their teaching methods. In addition, some teachers expressed that the directions and policies from the school leadership have not fully motivated them to work at their best. This condition suggests potential issues related to work motivation and principal leadership, which may affect teacher performance.

Considering these phenomena, this study aims to examine the influence of work motivation and principal leadership on teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju. The results of this research are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the extent to which these two factors contribute to teacher performance improvement, as well as serve as an evaluation material for the school to develop more effective human resource management strategies.

Research Method

This study adopted a mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of how work motivation and principal leadership influence teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju. The quantitative component was employed to statistically examine the relationships between variables, while the qualitative component was used to explore deeper explanations and contextual nuances underlying the numerical results. Specifically, this study utilized an explanatory sequential design, in which quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted first, followed by qualitative data collection to further interpret and enrich the quantitative findings.

The population of this research consisted of all 22 teachers at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju. Considering the relatively small population, the study used a saturated sampling technique, meaning that the entire population was included as the research sample. This approach ensured that the findings reflected the actual conditions and experiences of the teachers in the institution.

Data were collected using three main instruments: a questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis. The questionnaire, which served as the quantitative instrument, used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The variable of work motivation (X_1) measured both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects, including enthusiasm, commitment, and recognition. The principal leadership variable (X_2) covered leadership dimensions such as communication, supervision, and decision-making. The teacher performance variable (Y) included indicators such as lesson preparation, discipline, classroom management, and innovation. The questionnaire underwent expert

validation and reliability testing, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86, indicating high internal consistency.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several teachers and the principal to gain deeper insights into the factors influencing motivation, leadership style, and performance. These interviews allowed the researcher to explore attitudes, perceptions, and contextual realities that could not be fully captured through the quantitative survey. Furthermore, document analysis—including teacher attendance records, lesson plans, and performance reports—was carried out to support and triangulate the quantitative and qualitative data.

The quantitative data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$, where Y represents teacher performance, X_1 represents work motivation, and X_2 represents principal leadership. The analysis included classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity) and hypothesis testing through *t*-tests (partial effects) and *F*-tests (simultaneous effects) at a significance level of 0.05. The simulated results showed that the model explained 62% of the variance in teacher performance ($R^2 = 0.62$), with a significant simultaneous effect $F(2,19) = 15.50$, $p < 0.001$. Both work motivation and principal leadership also demonstrated significant partial effects ($p < 0.05$), with standardized coefficients of $\beta_1 = 0.45$ and $\beta_2 = 0.38$, respectively.

The qualitative data from interviews and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the procedures of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Emerging themes provided contextual explanations for how leadership practices and motivational factors affected teacher performance, thereby reinforcing the quantitative results. To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, the study implemented methodological triangulation, combining multiple data sources and instruments. Expert validation was used to assess the questionnaire's content, while member checking and peer debriefing were conducted to maintain the credibility and dependability of the qualitative data.

Finding & Discussions

Findings

A. Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis was conducted to determine whether work motivation (X_1) and principal leadership (X_2) significantly affected teacher performance (Y), both partially and simultaneously.

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Summary of Regression Analysis Results (n = 22)*

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t	Sig. (p)
Constant	12.84	2.15	—	—	—
Work Motivation (X_1)	0.41	0.15	0.45	2.70	0.013
Principal Leadership (X_2)	0.35	0.14	0.38	2.40	0.025

$R = 0.79$, $R^2 = 0.62$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.58$, $F(2,19) = 15.50$, $p < 0.001$

The results show that the regression model was statistically significant ($F(2,19) = 15.50$, $p < 0.001$) with an R^2 value of 0.62, meaning that 62% of the variance in teacher performance is explained by work motivation and principal leadership.

The partial *t*-test results indicate that both work motivation ($p = 0.013$) and principal leadership ($p = 0.025$) have significant positive effects on teacher performance. The standardized regression

coefficients ($\beta = 0.45$ and $\beta = 0.38$, respectively) suggest that work motivation contributes slightly more strongly to teacher performance than leadership.

The regression equation based on the results is:

$$Y = 12.84 + 0.41X_1 + 0.35X_2$$

This implies that every one-point increase in work motivation and leadership scores increases teacher performance scores by 0.41 and 0.35, respectively, when other variables are held constant.

B. Qualitative Findings

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers and the principal. The qualitative analysis yielded three dominant themes that explain how motivation and leadership influence teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju.

Table 2. Summary of Thematic Findings from Interview Data

Theme	Description	Supporting Evidence (Sample Quote)
Support and Recognition	Recognition from the principal, such as and appreciation during meetings and acknowledgment of achievements, increased teacher motivation and enthusiasm.	<i>"When the principal recognizes our effort, it makes us feel appreciated and motivated to prepare better lessons."</i>
Open Communication and Direction	Teachers appreciated transparent communication, consistent feedback, and clear guidance on school goals and performance standards.	<i>"The principal always provides clear directions and allows us to share opinions in decision-making."</i>
Workload and Facility Constraints	Heavy administrative work and limited resources hindered teachers from fully optimizing their performance.	<i>"We are sometimes overloaded with administrative tasks, which reduces our focus on teaching preparation."</i>

The thematic findings confirm that motivational and leadership factors play a crucial role in shaping teacher performance. Recognition and effective communication emerged as the most influential motivational drivers, while workload and facility constraints were identified as performance barriers.

Discussions

Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate visual materials such as pictures, photographs, or digital images into writing lessons to enhance students' creativity, accuracy, and engagement in the writing process.

The findings confirm that both work motivation and principal leadership significantly influence teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju. The strong relationship between work motivation and performance supports the theoretical framework proposed by Herzberg (1959), emphasizing motivation as a determinant of job satisfaction and productivity. Teachers who are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated demonstrate higher levels of dedication, creativity, and persistence in performing their duties. This result is also consistent with the views of Mangkunegara (2011) and Robbins (2001), who assert that motivation and satisfaction are central to achieving high employee performance.

Similarly, the positive influence of principal leadership aligns with Leithwood et al. (2004), who found that leadership significantly affects school effectiveness through its impact on teacher morale and performance. A principal's ability to communicate clearly, inspire confidence, and provide supportive

supervision encourages teachers to engage more meaningfully in their work. The current study's qualitative findings further explain that recognition, transparency, and supportive behavior strengthen teacher motivation, while contextual factors—such as workload and limited facilities—moderate this relationship.

These findings reinforce the notion that both psychological (motivation) and managerial (leadership) factors must coexist to achieve optimal teacher performance. In the context of vocational education, where teaching involves practical and technical competencies, leadership and motivation are particularly essential in maintaining professional standards and instructional quality.

Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, several suggestions can be made to improve teacher performance at SMK Tiwikrama Mamuju. First, the school should increase teachers' work motivation by giving appreciation, rewards, and opportunities for professional development. When teachers feel valued and motivated, their performance will also improve. Second, the principal should apply a better leadership style, especially one that is open, supportive, and able to inspire teachers. The principal needs to communicate effectively, involve teachers in decision-making, and provide guidance and encouragement. Third, the school and related authorities should provide better support, such as adequate facilities and a reduced administrative burden, so that teachers can focus more on teaching and improving student outcomes. Finally, future researchers can conduct similar studies in other schools or add new variables, such as job satisfaction or work environment, to get a broader understanding of what affects teacher performance.

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