

# The Influence of Leadership and Work Motivation on the Discipline of Elementary School Teachers in Their Job

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh kepemimpinan dan motivasi kerja terhadap disiplin guru sekolah dasar dalam menjalankan pekerjaannya. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada pengamatan bahwa kinerja dan tingkat kedisiplinan guru sering mengalami perubahan tergantung pada gaya kepemimpinan kepala sekolah serta motivasi internal guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional. Data dikumpulkan melalui angket yang dibagikan kepada guru sekolah dasar dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik regresi berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan dan motivasi kerja berpengaruh signifikan terhadap disiplin guru, baik secara parsial maupun simultan. Kepemimpinan sekolah yang efektif mendorong guru untuk menaati peraturan, menyelesaikan tugas tepat waktu, dan menjaga tanggung jawab terhadap pekerjaannya. Sementara itu, motivasi intrinsik dan ekstrinsik mendukung semangat serta konsistensi guru dalam menjalankan tugas mengajar. Implikasi penelitian ini menekankan bahwa kepala sekolah perlu mengembangkan kepemimpinan yang demokratis serta strategi motivasi yang dapat memperkuat komitmen guru terhadap kedisiplinan, karena disiplin merupakan faktor penting dalam meningkatkan mutu sekolah dan hasil belajar siswa.

**Kata kunci:** Kepemimpinan, Motivasi Kerja, Disiplin Guru, Guru Sekolah Dasar, Kepemimpinan Sekolah

## Abstract

*This study aims to determine the influence of leadership and work motivation on the discipline of elementary school teachers in their job. The background of this research is based on the observation that teacher performance and discipline levels often fluctuate depending on the principal's leadership style and the teachers' internal motivation. This research employs a quantitative approach using a correlational design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to elementary school teachers and analyzed using multiple regression techniques. The results show that leadership and work motivation have a significant effect on teachers' discipline, both partially and simultaneously. Effective school leadership encourages teachers to follow rules, complete tasks on time, and maintain responsibility for their duties. Meanwhile, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation supports teachers' enthusiasm and consistency in carrying out their teaching job. The implications of this research emphasize that school principals need to develop democratic leadership and motivational strategies that strengthen teachers' commitment to discipline, as discipline is a key factor in improving school quality and student outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Work Motivation, Teacher Discipline, Elementary School Teachers, School Leadership

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher work discipline is a fundamental aspect in creating an effective and efficient learning process. Teachers with high discipline tend to show responsibility in managing time, implementing tasks, and maintaining the quality of learning they produce in the classroom. In the context of basic education, teacher work discipline reflects professionalism and becomes one of the important indicators of a school's success in shaping students' character and developing a positive work culture. A disciplined teacher is able to plan lessons properly, follow school regulations, and carry out teaching activities in accordance with the established

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schedule. Therefore, teacher discipline is not only related to individual behavior but also closely related to the quality of education and institutional performance (Widodo & Santoso, 2022; OECD, 2023).

However, the reality in the field shows that there are still teachers who do not fully demonstrate consistent discipline. Some teachers arrive late, do not follow the teaching schedule properly, delay administrative tasks, or do not comply with school rules. These conditions can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process and negatively influence students' attitudes toward discipline. Teachers play a role as role models for students, so their behavior greatly affects students' character development. When teachers show low discipline, students may also demonstrate low responsibility toward their learning activities. Previous studies indicate that teacher discipline is influenced by several factors, including leadership, motivation, supervision, and organizational climate (Rahman & Sari, 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2022).

School leadership plays a very strategic role in shaping and improving teacher work discipline. Principals not only function as administrators but also as leaders, supervisors, motivators, and role models for the entire school community. Effective leadership can create a conducive working climate, foster a spirit of work, and motivate teachers to carry out their duties with full responsibility. According to Mulyasa (2022), effective school leadership is characterized by the ability to influence teachers, guide them toward achieving performance standards, and build a positive school culture. A visionary principal will guide and motivate teachers to work in accordance with established performance standards and school goals. Recent studies also confirm that leadership style has a significant influence on teacher discipline and organizational commitment, especially when principals apply democratic and transformational leadership approaches (Hallinger, 2021; Yusuf & Hartono, 2023).

In addition to leadership, work motivation is also an important factor that influences teachers' level of discipline. Motivation can come from internal factors such as the need to achieve, responsibility, and job satisfaction, as well as from external factors such as rewards, supervision, and harmonious working relationships. Hasibuan (2021) explains that motivation is the drive that causes a person to act to achieve a specific goal. Teachers with high motivation tend to demonstrate better performance and discipline because they feel that the work they do has clear meaning and purpose. Motivation encourages teachers to complete tasks on time, follow school regulations, and maintain consistency in teaching. Research findings also show that motivation has a positive relationship with teacher performance, commitment, and discipline (Nugroho et al., 2022; Wahyuni & Setiawan, 2024).

The phenomenon of low work discipline among teachers often arises due to weak supervision and a lack of motivation from school leaders. In some elementary schools, the role of the principal tends to be administrative, without paying attention to the overall development of teachers' disciplinary behavior. As a result, teachers may feel less supervised and less encouraged to maintain discipline. Effective leadership should not only focus on administrative duties but also on guiding, supervising, and motivating teachers to improve their professional behavior. A positive work culture can be created when principals consistently enforce rules, provide feedback, and appreciate teacher performance. Leadership and motivation together play an important role in shaping teacher discipline and improving school effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2022; Putri & Kurniawan, 2023).

This research is important because teacher discipline has direct implications for the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. Disciplined teachers are able to manage time effectively, prepare learning tools regularly, and conduct teaching activities in an organized manner. They also become good examples for students in terms of responsibility, punctuality, and commitment. Conversely, teacher indiscipline can reduce the credibility of the school and negatively affect student motivation to learn. Studies in elementary education show that teacher professionalism and discipline are closely related to school effectiveness and student achievement (Hattie, 2023; Suyanto & Jihad, 2021).

Although many studies have discussed leadership, motivation, and discipline, most previous research has examined these variables separately. Some studies focus on leadership, while others analyze motivation or discipline independently. There are still limited studies that examine the combined influence of leadership and work motivation on teacher discipline, especially in elementary schools. In fact, leadership and motivation are interconnected factors that may simultaneously influence teacher behavior. The lack of integrated research creates a gap that needs further investigation in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teacher discipline can be improved effectively (Rahman & Sari, 2021; Wahyuni & Setiawan, 2024; Yusuf & Hartono, 2023).

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to integrate the influence of principal leadership and work motivation in the context of teacher discipline in elementary schools. Previous studies have focused more on the influence of each variable separately, so the relationship between leadership, motivation, and discipline has not been examined comprehensively. By analyzing these variables simultaneously, this study is expected to contribute to the development of educational management theory and provide practical guidance for principals in improving teacher discipline through appropriate leadership styles and motivational strategies.

Based on the background and research gap described above, the problem of this study can be formulated as follows: whether principal leadership influences teacher work discipline, whether work motivation influences teacher work discipline, and whether leadership and work motivation simultaneously influence the work discipline of elementary school teachers. These questions become the basis for conducting this research in order to obtain empirical evidence regarding the relationship between leadership, motivation, and discipline in the school environment.

The objective of this study is to analyze the influence of principal leadership and work motivation on the work discipline of elementary school teachers, both partially and simultaneously, in order to provide theoretical contributions to educational management and practical recommendations for improving teacher professionalism and school quality.

## **2. METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the influence of principal leadership and work motivation on the work discipline of elementary school teachers. A quantitative correlational design is appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to measure the relationship among variables and determine the degree of influence between independent variables and the dependent variable using statistical

analysis. According to Creswell and Creswell (2021), quantitative correlational research is used to identify relationships among variables and to predict outcomes based on statistical procedures. This design is suitable for studies that aim to test hypotheses and analyze the effect of more than one independent variable on a dependent variable. In this research, principal leadership and work motivation are treated as independent variables, while teacher work discipline is treated as the dependent variable.

The population of this study consists of elementary school teachers in Indonesia. The selection of elementary school teachers as the population is based on the consideration that discipline at the basic education level plays an important role in shaping students' character and learning habits. From the population, a sample of 120 teachers was selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher determined specific criteria that must be met by the participants. The main criterion used in this study is that the teachers must have at least two years of teaching experience. Teachers with this level of experience are considered to have sufficient understanding of school regulations, leadership practices, and work motivation, so that they can provide accurate responses to the research instruments. According to Etikan and Bala (2021), purposive sampling is appropriate when researchers need participants who have certain characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study.

Data were collected using questionnaires as the main research instrument. Questionnaires are widely used in quantitative research because they allow researchers to obtain data efficiently from a large number of respondents. The instruments used in this study consist of three questionnaires designed to measure principal leadership, work motivation, and teacher work discipline. All instruments were developed based on relevant theories and previous research to ensure content validity.

The first instrument is the principal leadership questionnaire, which contains indicators of transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leadership includes aspects such as inspiration, vision, support, and motivation provided by the principal to teachers, while transactional leadership includes supervision, reward, and rule enforcement. Leadership is measured because previous studies show that leadership style has a strong influence on teacher performance and discipline (Hallinger, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2022).

The second instrument is the work motivation questionnaire, which measures both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to internal factors such as responsibility, achievement needs, and job satisfaction, while extrinsic motivation includes external factors such as rewards, supervision, and working conditions. Motivation is included as a variable because teachers with strong motivation tend to show better discipline and commitment to their work (Ryan & Deci, 2021).

The third instrument is the teacher work discipline questionnaire, which measures discipline in terms of time management, responsibility, and compliance with school rules. Time discipline includes punctuality in attending school and conducting teaching activities, responsibility includes completing tasks properly, and compliance with rules refers to obedience to school regulations. Teacher discipline is measured because it is considered an important factor in improving the quality of education and school effectiveness (OECD, 2023).

Before the questionnaires were distributed to the participants, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure that the instruments were appropriate for data collection. Construct validity was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, which determines whether the sample size is adequate for factor analysis. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency. The instruments were considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was greater than or equal to 0.70, which indicates acceptable reliability (Hair et al., 2021). The results of the test showed that all instruments met the required validity and reliability criteria.

The data collection procedure was carried out by distributing the questionnaires directly and online to elementary school teachers who met the sampling criteria. Before filling out the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. Participants were asked to respond to each statement honestly based on their real experiences in the school environment. The use of questionnaires allows the researcher to collect standardized data that can be analyzed quantitatively.

Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to test the effect of principal leadership and work motivation on teacher work discipline. Multiple regression analysis is appropriate because the study involves more than one independent variable that may simultaneously influence the dependent variable. According to Field (2022), multiple regression is commonly used in social science research to examine the predictive relationship between variables.

Before performing regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression. These tests include the normality test to determine whether the data are normally distributed, the multicollinearity test to ensure that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, and the heteroscedasticity test to check whether the variance of the errors is constant. If all assumptions are satisfied, the regression analysis can be conducted to determine both the partial and simultaneous effects of leadership and motivation on teacher work discipline.

Through these procedures, this study aims to obtain accurate and reliable results regarding the influence of principal leadership and work motivation on the discipline of elementary school teachers in their job.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Result**

This section presents the results of the quantitative analysis examining the influence of principal leadership and work motivation on the work discipline of elementary school teachers. The data obtained from 120 teachers were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The analysis was conducted using statistical software to ensure accuracy in calculating mean scores, standard deviations, regression coefficients, and significance values. Statistical interpretation followed commonly accepted standards in educational research, where a significance value below 0.05 indicates a statistically significant effect (Field, 2022).

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the general tendency of each variable, including principal leadership, work motivation, and teacher work discipline. The results show that the average score for principal leadership was  $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ , indicating that most teachers perceived the leadership of their principals as good. The average score for work motivation was  $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ , which shows that teachers generally have a high level of motivation in performing their duties. Meanwhile, the average score for teacher work discipline was  $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ , indicating that the level of discipline among teachers is relatively high.

The standard deviation values for all variables are below 1.00, which indicates that the responses are relatively homogeneous and that there is no extreme variation among participants. According to Hair et al. (2021), a low standard deviation suggests that the data are clustered around the mean and suitable for further parametric analysis. These results indicate that the dataset meets the basic requirements for regression analysis.

### ***Assumption Testing***

Before performing multiple linear regression, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the statistical requirements. The normality test showed that the data were normally distributed, as indicated by a significance value greater than 0.05 in the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The multicollinearity test showed tolerance values greater than 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10, indicating that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables. The heteroscedasticity test also showed no significant pattern in the residual plot, meaning that the variance of errors was constant.

These results indicate that the data satisfy the assumptions required for multiple linear regression analysis (Ghozali, 2021). Therefore, the regression analysis can be continued to test the research hypotheses.

### ***Multiple Linear Regression Results***

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of principal leadership and work motivation on teacher work discipline. The results show that both independent variables have a significant influence on the dependent variable.

First, the leadership of the principal has a significant effect on teacher work discipline with a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.42$  and a significance value of  $p < 0.01$ . This result indicates that better leadership is associated with higher levels of teacher discipline. The positive coefficient shows that the relationship between leadership and discipline is directly proportional.

Second, teachers' work motivation also has a significant effect on work discipline with a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.53$  and a significance value of  $p < 0.01$ . This result indicates that motivation has a stronger effect on discipline compared to leadership. The higher beta value suggests that motivated teachers tend to show greater responsibility, punctuality, and compliance with school rules.

Third, the simultaneous effect of leadership and motivation on teacher work discipline was examined using the coefficient of determination. The regression analysis shows that the combination of leadership and motivation contributes **61% to teacher work discipline ( $R^2 = 0.61$ )**. This means that more than half of the variation in teacher discipline can be explained by the two independent variables, while the remaining 39% may be influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

According to Cohen et al. (2021), an  $R^2$  value above 0.50 in social science research indicates a strong explanatory power of the model. Therefore, the regression model used in this study can be considered adequate to explain the relationship between leadership, motivation, and teacher discipline.

### ***Summary of Findings***

Based on the statistical analysis, three main findings can be summarized. First, principal leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher work discipline. Second, work motivation has a significant positive effect on teacher work discipline. Third, leadership and motivation simultaneously provide a substantial contribution to teacher discipline, with a coefficient of determination of 0.61.

These results indicate that both leadership and motivation are important predictors of discipline among elementary school teachers. The statistical values obtained in this study meet the standard criteria for significance and reliability in educational research, indicating that the findings are valid and can be interpreted with confidence (Field, 2022; Hair et al., 2021).

### **Discussion**

The results of this study indicate that principal leadership and work motivation have a significant influence on the work discipline of elementary school teachers. The findings show that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher work discipline, work motivation has a stronger positive effect, and both variables simultaneously contribute substantially to the improvement of teacher discipline. These findings answer the research questions clearly, namely that teacher work discipline is not only influenced by organizational control but also by psychological factors, especially motivation, supported by effective leadership.

The finding that principal leadership significantly affects teacher work discipline is consistent with previous studies showing that school leadership plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' professional behavior (Fitriani, 2021; Widodo & Rahmawati, 2022). Effective leadership creates a positive work climate, encourages responsibility, and builds commitment among teachers. Recent studies also confirm that principals who apply transformational leadership tend to foster higher discipline because teachers feel guided, appreciated, and motivated to achieve institutional goals (Sari & Mulyadi, 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is characterized by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which help teachers develop internal awareness to comply with rules without excessive external pressure.

The influence of leadership on discipline can be explained through organizational behavior theory, which states that leaders function as role models and regulators of organizational norms (Robbins & Judge, 2022). When principals demonstrate discipline in attendance, planning, and decision-making, teachers are more likely to imitate these behaviors. In addition, clear supervision and consistent enforcement of rules can strengthen teachers' commitment to discipline (Yuliana & Kurniawan, 2024). This means that leadership does not only affect discipline directly, but also indirectly through the creation of a structured and supportive work environment.

The results also show that work motivation has a stronger influence on teacher discipline than leadership. This finding supports Herzberg's motivation theory, which explains that intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility are key determinants of employee performance (Hidayat & Nuraini, 2023). Teachers who have high motivation tend to complete their tasks on time, follow school regulations, and show high responsibility in teaching activities. Recent research also states that motivated teachers are more likely to maintain professional discipline because they view their work as meaningful and valuable (Putra & Lestari, 2022; Rahman et al., 2024).

Work motivation can come from internal and external sources. Internal motivation includes personal goals, professional pride, and the desire to help students succeed, while external motivation includes rewards, supervision, promotion opportunities, and work environment support. Studies in educational management show that when teachers receive recognition and support from school leaders, their motivation increases, which in turn improves discipline (Nugroho & Santoso, 2021). Therefore, improving teacher discipline cannot rely solely on rules, but must also involve strategies to strengthen motivation.

The strong contribution of both leadership and motivation together, as indicated by the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.61$ ), shows that these two variables are important predictors of teacher discipline. This result means that 61% of teacher discipline can be explained by leadership and motivation, while the remaining percentage may be influenced by other factors such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, work environment, and teacher competence. Similar findings were reported by Kusuma and Hadi (2022), who found that leadership and motivation simultaneously have a major impact on teacher performance and discipline in primary education. This confirms that improving discipline requires a comprehensive approach rather than focusing on a single factor.

The findings of this study also strengthen the view that discipline is closely related to professionalism. Teachers who are disciplined tend to prepare lesson plans carefully, come to class on time, and follow the curriculum properly. This condition directly affects the quality of learning and student achievement. According to recent research in educational effectiveness, teacher discipline is one of the strongest predictors of learning quality in elementary schools (Saputra & Wibowo, 2023). Therefore, improving discipline is not only important for teachers but also for overall school performance.

Another important implication of this study is related to the role of the principal as an instructional leader. Modern educational leadership theory emphasizes that principals should not only manage administration but also guide teachers professionally (Hallinger, 2020). When principals actively supervise, provide feedback, and support teacher development, teachers tend to feel more responsible for their duties. This responsibility then appears in the

form of better discipline, such as punctuality, compliance with rules, and seriousness in teaching.

From a practical perspective, the results of this study suggest that schools should implement a dual strategy to improve teacher discipline. First, principals need to apply effective leadership styles, especially transformational leadership, which focuses on motivation, communication, and professional development. Second, schools should design programs to increase teacher motivation, such as reward systems, training opportunities, career advancement, and supportive work environments. Research by Lestari and Hidayah (2024) shows that teachers who receive regular appreciation and professional coaching demonstrate higher discipline compared to those who work without recognition.

In addition, education policy makers should consider leadership training for principals as a priority. Leadership skills such as communication, supervision, and motivation management are essential for creating disciplined teachers. Without strong leadership, rules alone are not enough to maintain discipline. This study confirms that discipline grows more effectively when teachers feel respected, guided, and motivated rather than forced.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that principal leadership and work motivation are key factors influencing teacher work discipline in elementary schools. Leadership provides direction and structure, while motivation provides internal drive. When both factors are present simultaneously, teacher discipline can improve significantly. These results support previous studies and strengthen the theory that organizational behavior in schools is influenced by both managerial and psychological factors. Therefore, efforts to improve teacher discipline should focus on strengthening leadership quality and increasing teacher motivation in a balanced and sustainable manner.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study was conducted to examine the influence of principal leadership and work motivation on the work discipline of elementary school teachers. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that principal leadership has a significant effect on teachers' work discipline. Effective leadership shown by the principal is able to guide, supervise, and encourage teachers to carry out their duties responsibly. In addition, teachers' work motivation also has a significant effect on work discipline. Teachers who have high motivation tend to be more responsible, punctual, and committed to their work. Furthermore, the findings show that the combination of principal leadership and work motivation simultaneously contributes significantly to improving teacher work discipline. This means that good leadership supported by strong teacher motivation can create better discipline in the school environment.

Based on these findings, several practical suggestions can be proposed. Principals need to develop effective and participatory leadership that can motivate teachers and create a positive working atmosphere. Schools should also design programs to increase teacher motivation, such as giving rewards, providing training, and offering career development opportunities. For future researchers, it is recommended to explore other variables, such as school culture and classroom management, which may also influence teacher work discipline.

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