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Educational Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance

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Abstract: *Educational leadership plays an important role in improving teacher performance; however, its effectiveness depends on the interaction between leadership practices, professional development mechanisms, and organizational conditions. This study aims to synthesize the relationship between educational leadership and teacher performance and to develop a conceptual model that explains how leadership contributes to professional improvement in educational institutions. This study employed a qualitative library research approach using an integrative literature review. Relevant scholarly publications were examined through thematic analysis to identify leadership approaches, professional mechanisms, and organizational factors associated with teacher performance. The findings indicate that instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership contribute to teacher performance through clear direction, academic supervision, empowerment, collaboration, and professional development. These relationships are supported by mechanisms such as work motivation, self-efficacy, and professional learning, while organizational conditions—including school climate, managerial support, resource availability, and professional autonomy—shape the effectiveness of leadership practices. Based on these findings, the study proposes a conceptual model consisting of four interrelated components: educational leadership practices, professional mechanisms, supporting organizational conditions, and improved teacher performance. The model emphasizes that teacher performance should be understood as the result of interactions between leadership actions, professional capacity, and organizational support rather than as the direct consequence of leadership alone. This study contributes to educational management by providing a conceptual framework for integrating leadership development, teacher empowerment, and organizational improvement into performance management strategies. Future empirical research is needed to validate the proposed model across diverse educational contexts.*
Keywords: *Educational Leadership, Teacher Performance, Leadership Approaches*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher performance is a critical component of educational institution management because it is closely associated with the fulfilment of professional responsibilities, the quality of teaching and learning, and the achievement of institutional goals. Such performance is determined not only by individual competencies but also by the organizational environment in which professional

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responsibilities are carried out. In this context, educational leadership plays an important role in directing work, coordinating resources, providing professional support, and establishing working conditions that enable teachers to develop their capabilities. Therefore, improving teacher performance should be positioned as an integral part of human resource management strategies within educational institutions.

Educational leadership encompasses various approaches that explain how leaders influence teachers' professional practices. Transformational leadership emphasizes a shared vision, motivation, and the development of organizational members' capacities. Instructional leadership focuses on academic guidance and the improvement of teaching practices, whereas distributed leadership emphasizes the sharing of responsibilities and the active involvement of organizational members. Elfira et al. (2024) demonstrated that school principals' instructional leadership is associated with teacher performance through teacher self-efficacy in the Indonesian educational context. This finding highlights the importance of examining the mechanisms through which leadership practices influence teachers' professional responsibilities.

The relationship between leadership and teacher performance is also shaped by organizational conditions that enable teachers to work effectively. Clear objectives, professional support, trust, and opportunities for competency development can help teachers translate leadership direction into concrete actions. Hallinger et al. (2025a), through a meta-analytic review of research on instructional leadership, examined the relationship between principals' leadership and teachers' attitudes. Meanwhile, Hallinger et al. (2025b) found that cultural context should be considered when examining the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher efficacy. These reviews indicate that the contribution of leadership needs to be understood in relation to teacher characteristics and institutional contexts rather than solely in terms of the leadership styles adopted.

Although research on leadership and teacher performance continues to expand, improvements in performance cannot be explained solely by a direct relationship between leaders' actions and teachers' work outcomes. For example, setting performance targets requires adequate resources, constructive supervision, and opportunities for competency development. Similarly,

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work motivation needs to be supported by a conducive organizational climate and a clear distribution of responsibilities. Maryani (2025) identified work motivation, organizational culture, and infrastructure management as contextual factors relevant to the relationship between school leadership and teacher performance. This finding reinforces the importance of understanding teacher performance as an outcome of the interaction between leadership practices and organizational conditions.

Several literature reviews have examined the relationship between school principals' leadership and teacher performance, including systematic reviews addressing leadership broadly and studies specifically focusing on instructional leadership. Putri et al. (2025), for example, examined the influence of principals' instructional leadership on teacher performance through a literature review. The existence of these studies indicates that the novelty of the present article cannot be based on the claim that the relationship between leadership and teacher performance has not previously been investigated. A more relevant avenue for advancing the literature is to synthesize different leadership approaches alongside professional mechanisms and organizational conditions, thereby developing a more integrated explanation of the relationships among managerial practices, teacher support, and professional performance.

In response to these issues, this article aims to analyze the role of educational leadership in improving teacher performance through an integrative literature review. The discussion seeks to identify the contributions of transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership; explain the organizational and professional mechanisms linking leadership to performance; and develop a conceptual framework for educational management. Rather than merely classifying leadership styles, this article examines the interrelationships among leadership practices, organizational support, and teachers' professional responsibilities. Accordingly, the review addresses three research questions: (1) How do different leadership approaches explain improvements in teacher performance? (2) Through which organizational and professional mechanisms does leadership support teacher performance? and (3) How can the relationships among leadership practices, organizational conditions, and teacher performance be synthesized into a conceptual framework for educational management?

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METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research to analyze the role of educational leadership in improving teacher performance. The data were drawn from scholarly journal articles, academic books, and relevant research publications. This approach was adopted to examine key concepts, compare theoretical perspectives, and synthesize previous research findings to develop a conceptual understanding of the relationship between educational leadership and teacher performance (Snyder, 2019;Hariani & Jabbar, 2026).

The literature was retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar using the keywords educational leadership, teacher performance, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, and distributed leadership. Publications from the preceding five years were prioritized, while relevant seminal works were retained to provide a theoretical foundation. Sources were selected based on their relevance to the research topic, publication credibility, and contribution to the research questions. The search and screening procedures, including the reasons for excluding sources, were documented to ensure transparency.

The data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic synthesis. The selected literature was categorized according to leadership approaches, mechanisms of influence, organizational conditions, and dimensions of teacher performance. The findings were then compared to identify recurring patterns, differences, and relationships among key concepts. The resulting analysis informed a conceptual synthesis explaining how leadership practices, professional empowerment, collaboration, and organizational support relate to teacher performance.

The trustworthiness of the review was strengthened by verifying bibliographic information, assessing the relevance of each source to the research focus, and ensuring that analytical claims could be traced to the literature examined. Differences in findings across studies were analyzed in relation to their respective contexts and methodological approaches rather than disregarded in pursuit of uniform conclusions. The search and literature selection processes were also documented to enhance transparency and enable the review process to be traced and examined.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

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1. Educational Leadership Approaches in Teacher Performance Management

Educational leadership plays a strategic role in directing human resources toward the achievement of institutional goals, including improving teacher performance. Three relevant approaches are transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership. Transformational leadership emphasizes a shared vision, motivation, and the development of teachers' capacities; instructional leadership focuses on academic guidance and the improvement of teaching and learning; while distributed leadership emphasizes participation and the sharing of responsibilities. Through a systematic review of distributed leadership, Mifsud (2024) identified conceptual and methodological diversity in the understanding of school leadership practices. This highlights the importance of analyzing leadership in terms of its underlying orientations and operational mechanisms rather than merely classifying leadership styles.

Transformational leadership contributes to strengthening teachers' commitment to organizational vision and goals through motivation, role modelling, and opportunities for professional development. In performance management, this approach helps align individual objectives with institutional priorities (Anissa et al. 2026; Jabbar et al. 2026). However, commitment does not automatically translate into improved performance when adequate resources and clear responsibilities are lacking. Therefore, the contribution of transformational leadership should be understood in terms of its capacity to establish a shared sense of purpose while creating conditions that enable teachers to fulfil their professional responsibilities effectively.

Instructional leadership directs attention specifically to the management of academic processes through the establishment of learning objectives, supervision, feedback, and teachers' professional development. Elfira et al. (2024) examined the relationship between principals' instructional leadership and teacher performance through the mediating role of teacher self-efficacy in the Indonesian educational context. Their findings provide a basis for understanding the importance of professional capacity and self-belief in the relationship between leadership and performance. From an educational management perspective, academic supervision should focus on identifying professional development needs and improving task implementation rather than merely conducting administrative inspections (Fitria & Ni'mah, 2026).

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Distributed leadership positions teachers and other organizational members as contributors to the exercise of leadership functions. Shared responsibilities, participation in decision-making, and professional collaboration enable educational institutions to leverage collective expertise. Hulsbos et al. (2025) explained that distributed leadership practices can take structural and relational forms, each requiring leadership support appropriate to its context. This approach can strengthen professional responsibility; however, it requires effective coordination and clearly defined authority to prevent overlapping roles and excessive workloads.

These three approaches serve complementary functions in teacher performance management. Transformational leadership establishes vision and commitment, instructional leadership directs the improvement of academic practices, and distributed leadership broadens participation and the utilization of collective capacity. Leadership effectiveness, therefore, depends not only on the style adopted but also on its alignment with teachers' professional needs and organizational conditions. This synthesis provides a foundation for examining the mechanisms through which leadership practices influence teacher performance in the following subsection.

2. Leadership Mechanisms for Improving Teacher Performance

Educational leadership improves teacher performance through guidance, academic supervision, and the strengthening of professional competencies. School principals are responsible not only for monitoring teaching and learning activities but also for helping teachers identify challenges, improve lesson planning, and evaluate instructional processes. Toni et al. (2023) identified principal supervision and lesson planning as aspects associated with teacher performance. These mechanisms indicate that leadership should be implemented through structured and continuous professional support rather than being limited to administrative instructions.

Beyond supervision, leadership plays a role in strengthening work motivation and fostering an organizational environment that supports teachers' professionalism. Recognizing teachers' contributions, providing opportunities to develop ideas, and cultivating a collaborative work culture can enhance teachers' engagement in achieving institutional goals. Raharja et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership and organizational culture were associated with teacher

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performance, with organizational culture demonstrating a stronger influence in the context of their study. This finding highlights that improving teacher performance requires more than leadership characteristics alone; it also depends on a work environment that promotes professional responsibility and continuous improvement.

The mechanisms through which leadership improves teacher performance comprise three interrelated processes: professional supervision and guidance, the strengthening of teacher motivation and participation, and the development of a conducive organizational climate. The effectiveness of these processes depends on leaders' ability to align teachers' professional development needs with organizational support. Veletić et al. (2023) demonstrated an association between leadership styles and perceptions of school climate, indicating that managing workplace relationships and organizational atmosphere constitutes an important dimension of educational leadership.

3. Organizational Factors Influencing Leadership Effectiveness

The effectiveness of educational leadership depends not only on the approach adopted by school principals but also on the organizational conditions in which leadership is exercised. School climate, communication patterns, professional support, and working relationships among organizational members can strengthen or constrain the influence of leadership on teacher performance. Jiang and Liu (2024) demonstrated that school climate is associated with principals' characteristics and leadership practices. This finding indicates that leadership operates within an organizational environment that shapes teachers' behaviour and work experiences. Consequently, effective leadership requires a conducive working climate, open communication, and professional relationships that support the fulfilment of teachers' responsibilities.

Other factors influencing leadership effectiveness include managerial support, working conditions, professional autonomy, and opportunities for competency development. Ulfah et al. (2024) examined the relationships between managerial support, working conditions, and teacher performance, including the roles of motivation and professional development. Meanwhile, Farida et al. (2023) identified work autonomy and supervision as factors associated with teacher performance. These findings suggest that leadership direction must be accompanied by tangible

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support, including clearly defined responsibilities, adequate resources, opportunities for teachers to make professional decisions, and access to competency development. Without such support, leadership policies risk remaining at the administrative level without fully contributing to improvements in teacher performance.

Table 1. Organizational Factors Influencing Educational Leadership Effectiveness

Organizational factors	Required forms of support	Relationship with teacher performance
School climate	Open communication, healthy working relationships, and mutual trust	Promotes workplace well-being and teacher engagement in school activities
Managerial support	Clear responsibilities, guidance, facilities, and professional assistance	Helps teachers perform their duties effectively and systematically
Working conditions	Equitable workload distribution and adequate resources	Supports the effective fulfilment of professional responsibilities
Professional autonomy	Opportunities to make decisions and develop teaching strategies	Encourages professional responsibility, creativity, and initiative
Competency development	Training, supervision, reflection, and professional collaboration	Strengthens teachers' capacity to improve their professional practices

Source: Compiled by the authors based on a synthesis of Jiang and Liu (2024), Ulfah et al. (2024), and Farida et al. (2023).

As shown in Table 1, organizational factors do not operate independently but interact in shaping leadership effectiveness. A conducive school climate needs to be accompanied by adequate managerial support and appropriate working conditions. At the same time, professional autonomy and competency development provide teachers with opportunities to translate organizational support into improvements in their performance. These factors collectively shape the extent to which leadership practices can be implemented effectively in daily professional activities.

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Based on the preceding discussion and the organizational factors identified, leadership effectiveness can be understood as the result of alignment between leadership practices and the organizational conditions that support their implementation. Leadership success should not be assessed solely in terms of principals' ability to provide direction or conduct supervision, but also in their capacity to establish a working environment that enables teachers to fulfil their responsibilities professionally, collaboratively, and sustainably. Therefore, teacher performance management should address individual capacity development and organizational improvement as complementary dimensions.

4. Conceptual Relationship Between Educational Leadership and Teacher Performance

The relationship between educational leadership and teacher performance can be understood as a process involving leadership practices, professional development mechanisms, and organizational support. Leadership not only provides direction but also establishes conditions that enable teachers to strengthen their capacities and improve their professional practices. Ma and Marion (2024) demonstrated that distributed leadership can support teacher collaboration directly and indirectly through professional learning and an innovative school climate. This finding suggests that the influence of leadership on teachers' professional practices can be mediated by professional processes that develop within the school environment.

Another mechanism that helps explain this relationship is teacher self-efficacy, defined as teachers' beliefs in their ability to fulfil their professional responsibilities. Thien and Liu (2024) found that instructional leadership is associated with teachers' professional learning, with self-efficacy serving as a mediating mechanism. Meanwhile, Sumiati et al. (2024) demonstrated that collaborative school culture mediates the relationship between principals' adaptive leadership and teacher performance. These findings reinforce the understanding that leadership effectiveness depends not only on leaders' actions but also on the development of teachers' professional capacities and the quality of the working environment established within schools (Kurniawati & Alwi, 2026).

Based on these findings, this study conceptualizes the relationship between educational leadership and teacher performance through a model in which leadership practices provide

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strategic direction, professional mechanisms connect leadership actions with changes in teachers' practices, and organizational conditions provide the necessary support. The proposed model represents a conceptual synthesis of the literature reviewed rather than an empirically validated model. It offers an analytical framework for understanding how leadership practices, professional development processes, and organizational support interact in efforts to improve teacher performance.

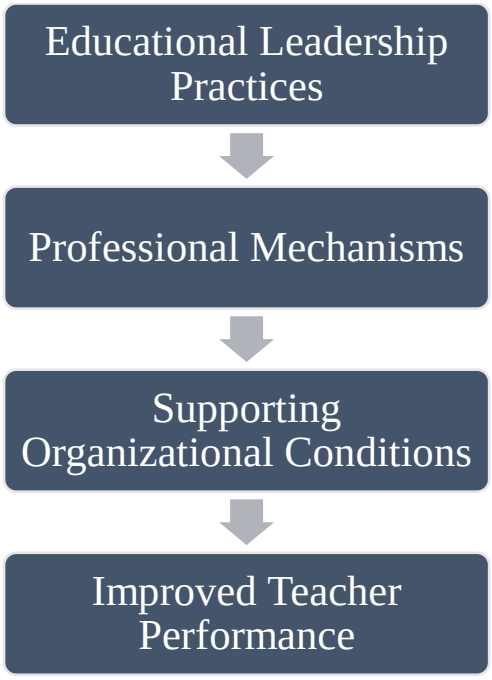


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Relationship Between Educational Leadership and Teacher Performance

Source: Authors' synthesis based on the literature reviewed.

Based on the preceding discussion and the conceptual model, the relationship between educational leadership and teacher performance can be understood as multidimensional. Leadership practices provide direction and support, professional mechanisms connect leadership actions with the development of teachers' capacities, and organizational conditions enable these processes to function effectively. These three components need to be managed in an integrated manner to ensure that improvements in teacher performance extend beyond administrative

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compliance and are reflected in the quality of task implementation, professional responsibility, and continuous improvement in professional practice.

From the perspective of Islamic Education Management, the model highlights the importance of leadership that focuses not only on achieving institutional targets but also on empowering human resources, strengthening a collaborative work culture, and developing teachers' professionalism. The managerial implications include the need for school and madrasah principals to align supervision, professional guidance, competency development, and organizational support within a coherent and sustainable performance management strategy.

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that educational leadership plays an important role in improving teacher performance through the integration of leadership practices, professional development mechanisms, and supportive organizational conditions. Instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership approaches contribute to establishing direction, strengthening teacher motivation, encouraging collaboration, and promoting professional growth. However, their effectiveness depends not only on the leadership practices adopted by school principals but also on the organizational environment in which teachers perform their duties.

The conceptual model developed in this study identifies four interrelated components: educational leadership practices, professional mechanisms, supporting organizational conditions, and improved teacher performance. Leadership practices provide strategic direction and professional guidance, while motivation, self-efficacy, collaboration, and competency development connect leadership actions with changes in teachers' professional practices. Meanwhile, a conducive school climate, managerial support, adequate resources, and professional autonomy create conditions that enable these processes to operate effectively. Teacher performance is therefore understood as the outcome of interactions among leadership, professional capacity, and organizational support rather than as the consequence of leadership alone.

From an educational management perspective, these findings highlight the importance of integrating supervision, teacher empowerment, professional development, and organizational

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improvement into a coherent performance management strategy. School principals need to move beyond administrative monitoring toward leadership practices that encourage teacher participation, continuous learning, and professional responsibility. Nevertheless, because this study relies on a literature-based conceptual synthesis, the proposed model requires empirical examination across different educational contexts. Future research could test the relationships among its components and investigate how organizational conditions influence the effectiveness of educational leadership in improving teacher performance.

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