



THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP AND COMPETENCE ON WORK CULTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PRINCIPAL TEACHERS IN PICUNG DISTRICT, PANDEGLANG REGENCY

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Abstract

The low teacher work culture, weak principal leadership, and suboptimal principal competency are the background of this study because these conditions affect teacher performance. The main focus of this study is to examine the influence of principal leadership and competency on work culture, and its impact on teacher performance. The research approach used is quantitative with a survey method. The research subjects included 205 public elementary school teachers in Picung District, Pandeglang Regency, with a sample of 135 people determined using a proportional technique. Data were collected using a Likert-based questionnaire instrument, then analyzed through regression with the help of SmartPLS software.

Research findings show that principal leadership has a positive and significant influence on both work culture and teacher performance. Similarly, principal competence has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on both work culture and teacher performance. Furthermore, work culture serves as a mediating variable, strengthening the relationship between principal leadership and competence and improved teacher performance. It can be concluded that the more effective the leadership and the more optimal the principal's competence, the better the work culture developed among teachers. Ultimately, this condition encourages improved teacher performance and contributes to higher quality education.

Keywords: Leadership, Principal Competence, Work Culture, and Teacher Performance

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in developing superior human resources, with teachers as the key actors in successful learning. According to Kusumaningrum, Chaerany, and Kholisah (2024), teacher performance is a strategic aspect influencing classroom effectiveness. Performance encompasses not only student academic achievement but also the ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning. Santosa and Riyadi (2022) emphasize that high-performing teachers are able to create a conducive learning climate. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, teacher performance demands professionalism, pedagogical skills, social skills, and personality. Performance evaluation serves as the basis for competency development and improving educational quality.

Teacher performance can be evaluated through several indicators, such as content mastery, professionalism, adaptability, and the ability to perform under pressure. Teachers must understand the uniqueness of each student to tailor learning to their needs. Facing advances in science and technology, teachers are required to be adaptive and have a positive influence. However, improving teacher performance relies heavily on the support of all parties, including the principal. Effective leadership is a crucial factor in teacher development, as the principal's leadership style determines the success of administration and management, as well as the direction of educational institution development toward improved quality.

The principal plays a central role in the success of educational institutions. As the primary motivator, he or she is responsible for organizing, directing, and monitoring all learning activities (Ariyani, 2022). To lead successfully, a principal is required to possess high levels of problem-solving intelligence, emotional stability to resist being easily influenced by circumstances, and social intelligence in interacting with subordinates. The effectiveness of an elementary school is also determined by its ability to supervise teachers, as teacher performance is not developed instantly but through continuous development. Therefore, the success or failure of a school is greatly influenced by the quality of the principal's leadership.

A preliminary survey of teacher performance, leadership, principal competency, and work culture at SDN Picung District, Pandeglang Regency, provides important insights into the state of education. The findings indicate that teacher performance remains suboptimal, particularly in lesson planning, evaluation, and teaching reflection. In terms of leadership, the majority of teachers have not demonstrated initiative, the ability to influence, or motivate colleagues. Meanwhile, principal competency is considered quite good in resource management, but remains weak in terms of school development vision. The work culture demonstrates a high level of individual responsibility, although discipline, collaboration, and innovation still need to be improved.

Various studies emphasize the crucial role of principals in building a healthy work culture in schools. Rahman (2023) demonstrated that effective leadership fosters creativity and clear communication, while Kesumawati (2022) emphasized emotional intelligence in fostering positive relationships. Nurachadijat and Babullah (2023) highlighted participatory leadership that encourages teacher engagement. Conversely, Wahidy (2024) and Rachman (2022) demonstrated the negative impact of ineffective or authoritarian leadership. Eddy (2020) emphasized the importance of a clear vision, while Santoso and Saine (2024) demonstrated the direct influence of leadership on teacher effectiveness. Haenilah (2022) emphasized instructional leadership in improving teacher performance.

Although leadership, principal competence, and work culture are often cited as important factors in improving teacher performance, previous research findings have shown mixed results. Some studies emphasize the significant influence of leadership on teacher motivation, creativity, and effectiveness. However, other research indicates that teacher performance is more influenced by external factors such as organizational culture, policy support, and personal characteristics. This suggests that the relationship between leadership, principal competence, and work culture and teacher performance is not straightforward and requires more in-depth analysis.

The research gap is evident in the conflicting results of several studies. Some researchers confirm the positive influence of principal competence and work culture on improving teacher performance, while other studies find no significant relationship. This difference may be influenced by the school context, environmental conditions, and other under-researched intermediary variables.

Therefore, further research is needed that comprehensively examines the interrelationships between these factors to provide a complete picture of the dominant factors influencing teacher performance.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative effort to simultaneously examine the role of leadership, principal competence, and work culture on teacher performance in public elementary schools, particularly in Picung District, Pandeglang Regency. Unlike previous studies that tended to highlight these factors separately, this study attempts to map the holistic relationship between variables within a single analytical framework. This approach is expected to provide theoretical contributions to enrich the literature on educational management and offer practical implications for improving the quality of teacher performance through strengthening leadership, principal competence, and a harmonious work culture. With this focus, this study carries the title "The Influence of Leadership and Principal Competence on Work Culture and Its Implications for Elementary School Teacher Performance in Picung District, Pandeglang Regency."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Performance

Teacher performance is a crucial indicator of educational success because it directly relates to the quality of learning provided to students. According to Laila (2021), teacher performance encompasses loyalty, commitment, mastery of methods, teaching materials, and utilization of learning resources. Meanwhile, Magdalena et al. (2020) emphasize that teacher performance is reflected in the success achieved based on school administration standards. Haq et al. (2021) similarly stated that teacher performance encompasses planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. Seran et al. (2021) define teacher performance as an effective effort to complete learning tasks. Thus, teacher performance emphasizes professionalism, work ethic, and discipline in carrying out tasks.

Leadership

Leadership is a crucial process in educational organizations, involving a leader's ability to influence, direct, and inspire others to achieve shared goals (Harmendi et al., 2021). Wahjosumijo, in Syamsudin (2020), emphasized that leadership encompasses personal character, behavioral patterns, and social interactions. Ali & Hasanah (2021) added that leadership emerges when group members recognize a person's authority in determining the course of action. In the school context, principal leadership has been shown to influence work culture, teacher motivation, and the quality of student learning (Supawi et al., 2024; Suryadi et al., 2024).

Principal Competence

Competence is defined as an ability encompassing observable knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are directly related to job success (Satato et al., 2022). In the educational context, school

principals are required to possess competencies in five key areas: personality, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social, as stipulated in the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 13 of 2007 (Hidayat et al., 2019). These competencies serve as an important foundation for school principals in making strategic decisions, building a conducive work climate, and improving teacher performance.

Thinking Framework

This research framework explains the relationship between leadership, principal competence, work culture, and teacher performance. Each variable has both direct and indirect influences, making it crucial to analyze them systematically, as follows.

1. The Influence of Leadership on Teacher Performance

The principal's leadership has a direct effect on teacher performance. Leaders who are communicative, visionary, and able to motivate will encourage teachers to work more disciplined and professional. Leithwood et al. (2021) assert that transformational leadership increases motivation, sense of responsibility, and quality of learning. With the right leadership style, teachers are motivated to carry out tasks optimally and oriented towards quality.

2. The Influence of Principal Competence on Teacher Performance

Principal competencies, encompassing personality, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social skills, influence the quality of teacher performance. A competent principal is able to guide, support, and provide appropriate direction. This fosters a sense of appreciation among teachers, increases work motivation, and improves learning planning and implementation. A high level of principal competency directly impacts teachers' success in achieving performance targets.

3. The Influence of Work Culture on Teacher Performance

A positive work culture, encompassing the values of discipline, integrity, cooperation, and responsibility, is a crucial factor in boosting teacher performance. Ministerial Regulation No. 39 of 2012 emphasizes work culture indicators as benchmarks for organizational success. A healthy work culture creates a conducive atmosphere, enabling teachers to be more enthusiastic, creative, and productive in carrying out their teaching duties at school.

4. The Influence of Leadership on Work Culture

The principal's leadership plays a role in shaping work culture through exemplary behavior, communication, and strengthening organizational values. According to Schein (2021), culture is formed through consistent leadership behavior that is emulated by members. Principals with a transformational style foster a sense of belonging, collective spirit, and a collaborative work culture. With inspirational leadership, the work culture in schools becomes stronger, more productive, and more sustainable.

5. The Influence of Principal Competence on Work Culture

A high level of principal competence supports the creation of a collaborative and professional work culture. According to Nurlela and Sulastris (2023), managerial skills and a leader's personality significantly influence work culture values such as discipline, innovation, and responsibility. Competent principals exemplify work ethic, build effective communication, and foster a healthy work environment, thereby strengthening the organizational culture.

6. The Influence of Leadership on Teacher Performance through Work Culture

Leadership indirectly influences teacher performance through work culture. A visionary principal fosters values of discipline, innovation, and collaboration, which strengthen teacher motivation. Suryadi et al. (2024) emphasize that effective leadership creates a healthy climate, enhances collaboration, and fosters a sense of belonging within the school. This conducive work culture ultimately increases teacher productivity, professionalism, and performance quality.

7. The Influence of Principal Competence on Teacher Performance through Work Culture

Principal competence also impacts teacher performance through the work culture it fosters. Supawi et al. (2024) stated that a leader's managerial and social competence creates a collaborative climate that enhances teacher professionalism. By instilling a work culture, teachers become more disciplined, responsible, and innovative. This demonstrates the crucial role principal competence plays in sustainably improving teacher performance.

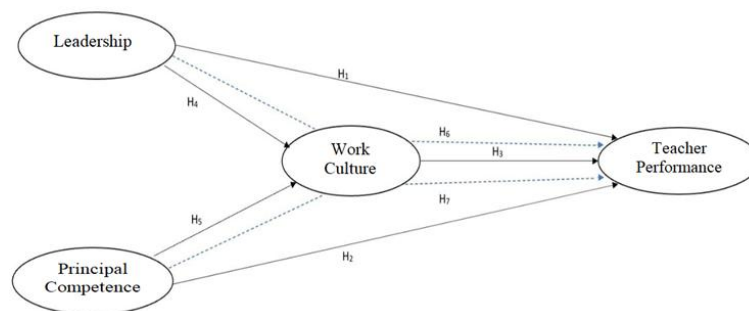


Figure 1 Thinking Framework

METHOD

Research methods

The approach used in this study was quantitative, with the aim of measuring the relationships between variables formulated in the conceptual framework. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research emphasizes the collection of numerical data and statistical analysis to test established hypotheses. This approach was chosen because it provides an objective picture of the phenomena studied, particularly those related to leadership, principal competence, work culture, and teacher performance. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data from respondents. Before distribution, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure accurate data.

Population and Sample

A population is the entirety of research subjects who share certain characteristics. Adnyana (2021) emphasized that understanding the population is crucial for researchers to determine a representative sample. The population in this study was all 205 public elementary school teachers in Picung District, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, as listed in Table 3.2.

A sample is a subset of a population considered to represent the overall characteristics of the population (Sugiyono, 2022). In this study, the sample size was determined using the formula proposed by Hair et al. (2017), which is five times the number of indicators. The total number of indicators in this study was 27, so the minimum sample size required was 135 respondents. The sample was selected proportionally to maintain representation in each school.

Data Collection Techniques

Primary data was used in this study because it was obtained directly from respondents through questionnaire distribution. Primary data can be collected through interviews, observations, and questionnaires. This study used a five-point Likert-type questionnaire, ranging from "never" to "always." This scale was chosen to allow respondents to provide clear, measurable assessments that align with their perceptions of each established research indicator.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach using Smart PLS software. This analysis was chosen because it can test causal relationships between latent variables, both directly and indirectly. The analysis stages include testing the outer model and inner model. The outer model is used to test the validity and reliability of the instrument through indicators such as loading factors, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (Ghozali, 2017). Meanwhile, the inner model is used to test the strength of the relationship between latent variables by considering the R^2 , Q^2 , and path coefficient values.

Structural Equation Analysis Model

The analysis model is structured as a path diagram that illustrates the relationships between variables. The outer model explains the relationship between indicators and constructs, while the inner model describes the relationships between latent variables. This structural equation is used to test the formulated research hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the t-statistic and probability values. The decision-making criteria were to reject H_0 if the t-value was > 1.96 with $p < 0.05$ (Abdillah & Hartono, 2015). Furthermore, the mediating variable of work culture was tested to determine whether

the influence of principal leadership and competence on teacher performance occurred directly or through mediation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

Statistical Description of Variables

Statistical descriptions of the variables were conducted to provide a general overview of the tendencies of respondents' answers to the variables of Principal Leadership (X1), Principal Competence (X2), Work Culture (Y), and Teacher Performance (Z). All indicators were measured on a Likert scale of 1–5.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

No	Variables	Number of Indicators	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1	Leadership (X1)	6	4,36	0,48	2,83	5,00
2	Principal Competence (X2)	6	4,29	0,49	2,83	5,00
3	Work Culture (Y)	5	4,33	0,47	2,60	5,00
4	Teacher Performance (Z)	10	4,33	0,47	2,60	5,00

Source: Data processed, 2025

All variables had an average value > 4.00 with a standard deviation < 1 , indicating consistency in respondents' perceptions. Leadership achieved the highest average, followed by Work Culture and Teacher Performance, while Principal Competence remained in the high category.

Requirements Analysis Testing

The analysis was carried out with PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 4. The test consisted of outer model (validity and reliability) and inner model (relationship between constructs).

1. Outer Model Evaluation

a. Convergent Validity

The loading factor results for all indicators are > 0.70 , indicating that the indicators are valid.

Table 2. Summary of Variable Loading Factors

Variables	Rentang Loading Factor	Conclusion
Leadership	0,764 – 0,837	Valid
Principal Competence	0,808 – 0,866	Valid
Work Culture	0,804 – 0,832	Valid
Teacher Performance	0,728 – 0,805	Valid

Source: Data processed, 2025

All indicators are able to reflect the construct well according to the criteria of Hair et al. (2020).

b. Discriminant Validity

The cross loading and AVE tests show that each construct has a higher correlation with its own indicators than other constructs.

Table 3 AVE and $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ Values

Variables	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Conclusion
Leadership	0,688	0,83	Valid
Principal Competence	0,705	0,84	Valid
Work Culture	0,668	0,82	Valid
Teacher Performance	0,602	0,78	Valid

Source: Data processed, 2025

Discriminant validity is met because the $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ of each variable is greater than the correlation between constructs.

c. Composite Reliability dan Cronbach's Alpha

Table 4 Construct Reliability

Variables	CR	Cronbach Alpha	Conclusion
Leadership	0,895	0,892	Reliable
Principal Competence	0,919	0,916	Reliable
Work Culture	0,882	0,876	Reliable
Teacher Performance	0,928	0,927	Reliable

Source: Data processed, 2025

All variables have a value > 0.70 , indicating that the instrument is very reliable.

2. Inner Model Evaluation

The inner model is used to measure the relationship between latent variables.

a. Path Coefficient

Table 5 Summary of Path Coefficients

Connection	Coefficient	t-stat	Conclusion
Leadership $\rightarrow$ Work Culture	0,430	4,177	Significant
Competence $\rightarrow$ Work Culture	0,327	3,253	Significant
Work Culture $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance	0,622	7,853	Significant
Leadership $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance	0,408	4,209	Significant
Competence $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance	0,001	2,015	Significant

Source: Data processed, 2025

All pathways have a significant positive influence, showing the important role of Leadership, Competence, and Work Culture on Teacher Performance.

b. Goodness of Fit (R^2)

Table 6 R-square Values of Endogenous Constructs

Endogenous Variables	R^2	Interpretation
Work Culture	0,490	Currently
Teacher Performance	0,592	Strong

Source: Data processed, 2025

Leadership and Competence account for 49% of the variation in work culture, while teacher performance accounts for 59.2%. The model has fairly strong predictive power.

Hypothesis Testing

Testing was performed using SmartPLS bootstrapping.

1. Direct Effect Test, Results show:
 - a. Leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher performance.
 - b. Principal Competence has a significant positive effect on Teacher Performance.
 - c. Work Culture has a significant positive effect on Teacher Performance.
 - d. Leadership has a significant positive influence on Work Culture.
 - e. Principal Competence has a significant positive effect on Work Culture.
2. Indirect Influence Test, Work Culture was tested as a mediator.

Table 7 Indirect Effect Tests

Mediation Path	Coefficient	t-stat	p-value	Conclusion
Leadership → Work Culture → Teacher Performance	0,067	2,792	0,005	Significant
Competence → Work Culture → Teacher Performance	0,039	2,167	0,030	Significant

Work culture has been shown to mediate the relationship between leadership and competence on teacher performance. This confirms that a positive work climate is a key factor in successfully improving performance.

Discussion

The discussion of research results regarding the influence of leadership and principal competence on work culture and its implications on teacher performance, can be explained in terms of the relationship between variables as follows:

1. The Influence of Leadership on Teacher Performance

The research results show that principal leadership has a significant impact on teacher performance. Principals who provide clear direction, role models, and emotional support can improve teacher motivation, discipline, and productivity. This finding aligns with Rahmani et al. (2019), who asserted that an effective leadership style can create a conducive work environment and increase teaching enthusiasm. Therefore, good leadership not only creates a positive work environment but also encourages teachers to be more innovative in their teaching, resulting in significantly improved student learning outcomes.

2. The Influence of Principal Competence on Teacher Performance

Principal competence has been proven to positively impact teacher performance. Principals competent in management, instructional leadership, and interpersonal communication are able to serve as role models and motivators. This is supported by Bakry and Syamril (2021), who

emphasized that competent leaders can improve team morale. Competence in decision-making, supervision, and professional development provides tangible support to teachers in their teaching duties. Thus, teachers feel more valued and are able to perform optimally, ultimately improving the quality of learning in schools.

3. The Influence of Work Culture on Teacher Performance

Work culture also positively influences teacher performance. A school environment that upholds discipline, responsibility, and cooperation will shape productive and professional teacher behavior. This finding aligns with Hidayat and Lukito (2020), who stated that a strong work culture can increase organizational effectiveness. A positive work culture makes teachers more consistent, has a strong work ethic, and supports their colleagues. Consequently, the quality of learning is more stable, and teachers are able to fulfill their professional roles according to school demands.

4. The Influence of Leadership on Work Culture

Principal leadership significantly influences school work culture. Leaders who provide clear direction, act fairly, and demonstrate integrity will create a conducive work environment. This finding is consistent with research by Suhardi (2019), which confirms that a positive leadership style strengthens organizational values. Principals who foster a collaborative spirit can foster a work culture based on discipline, professionalism, and innovation. Thus, leadership serves as a key driver in the formation of positive work patterns in elementary schools.

5. The Influence of Principal Competence on Work Culture

Principal competence has been proven to positively influence teacher work culture. Leaders who possess managerial, pedagogical, and professional ethical skills will foster positive work values in schools. Setiawan (2019) emphasized that leadership competence can strengthen organizational norms. Competent principals are able to manage conflict, build effective communication, and inspire teachers. This creates a more focused, disciplined, and achievement-oriented work culture. Therefore, principal competence is key to building a healthy work climate in elementary schools.

6. The Influence of Leadership on Teacher Performance Through Work Culture

Work culture has been shown to mediate the relationship between leadership and teacher performance. Principals with visionary, participatory, and supportive leadership foster a conducive work culture, ultimately improving teacher performance. This aligns with organizational culture theory, which states that culture is a link between leadership style and performance. This means that leadership influences not only directly but also through the formation of collective work values and behaviors. Teachers are more productive when a positive work culture is institutionalized.

7. The Influence of Principal Competence on Teacher Performance Through Work Culture

The research results show that principal competence influences teacher performance through work culture. Principals who are competent in human resource management, supervision, and coaching are able to establish a productive work culture. This work culture then drives improved teacher performance. This finding aligns with Handayani et al. (2020), who asserted that leader competence influences organizational work behavior. Therefore, principal competence not only has a direct impact but also strengthens teacher performance by creating a conducive work culture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and testing, several important conclusions can be drawn. *First*, principal leadership has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on teacher performance. The better the leadership style implemented, the more teachers' performance improves in carrying out their duties. *Second* Principal competence also has a positive impact on teacher performance, although its direct contribution is relatively small. This indicates that competency remains necessary to support improved learning quality.

Third Work culture plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance. A positive work culture, characterized by discipline, responsibility, and togetherness, will create a conducive work environment that will improve teacher performance. *Fourth* Leadership has been shown to influence work culture. Effective leaders are able to instill positive values, norms, and work ethics in schools. *Fifth*, the principal's competence also has a significant impact on work culture, where the higher the competence, the stronger the work culture that is formed.

This study also confirms the indirect influence of both principal leadership and competence on teacher performance through work culture. This means that work culture is an important mediating variable that strengthens this relationship. Therefore, improving teacher performance is determined not only by the principal's leadership and competence, but also by the extent to which a positive work culture is built and implemented in elementary schools.

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