

Transformational Leadership in Vocational Education: School Principal Strategies for Teacher Performance Improvement

Ujang Permana¹, Hanafiah², R. Supyan Sauri³, Emay Mastiani⁴

¹ Universitas Islam Nusantara; Universitas YPIB Majalengka, Indonesia; ujangpermana1974@gmail.com

² Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia; hanafiah@uninus.ac.id

³ Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia; uyunsupyan@uninus.ac.id

⁴ Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia; emaymastiani@uninus.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Teacher performance plays a crucial role in achieving educational success and is significantly influenced by the leadership and management of school principals. This study investigates how principal management practices contribute to improving teacher performance in vocational high schools. This qualitative descriptive study employed a case study approach and was conducted at two vocational high schools in Majalengka. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods, involving principals, teachers, and students. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data analysis process included data reduction, data display, and verification, while data validity was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability measures. Findings reveal that effective principal planning is evident through the development of school vision, mission, goals, strategic and operational plans, and a positive working climate. Organizational efforts include establishing a clear structure, curriculum planning, co-curricular programs, teaching schedules, and job descriptions. Implementation is carried out via activities such as socialization, in-house training (IHT), curriculum workshops, lesson plan (RPP) training, industrial work practice programs, and discipline enforcement. Evaluation of principal leadership is conducted by monitoring teacher attendance, assessing understanding of school policies, and observing classroom practices. Principals play a pivotal role in enhancing teacher performance through strategic planning, structured organization, effective implementation, and continuous evaluation. These efforts collectively contribute to improved teaching quality and educational outcomes in vocational schools.

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Corresponding Author:

Ujang Permana

Universitas Islam Nusantara; ujangpermana1974@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Schools are formal institutions that carry out learning processes with the aim of providing understanding to students from not knowing to knowing so that changes in knowledge and attitudes

occur in students (Adhikari & Shrestha, 2023; Assem, Nartey, Appiah, & Aidoo, 2023; Muhammadiyah, Hamsiah, Muzakki, Nuramila, & Fauzi, 2022; Norqvist & Ärlestig, 2021; Okada & Gray, 2023). To improve the quality of a school, many things are involved, from the principal, teachers, students to the administrative staff at the school. The principal is one of the educational components that plays the most significant role in improving the quality of education. The principal is the central figure responsible for a wide range of school operations. This includes supervising the implementation of curriculum, handling administrative matters, developing other educational staff, and ensuring the proper maintenance of infrastructure and facilities (Herman, 2022; Hidayat, Muspawi, & Rahman, 2023; Siregar, 2023).

Principal management, as conceptualized by George R. Terry (Terry & Rue, 2019), encompasses four key functions: planning, organizing, motivating, and supervising. These foundational elements are essential for achieving a school's objectives. However, in today's educational landscape, effective school leadership increasingly incorporates transformational leadership principles. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership is defined by four core components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This leadership style emphasizes not only task completion but also the development of teachers' potential, motivating them to prioritize collective goals over personal interests while fostering innovation and creativity.

Within the framework of principal management, teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of education, as they are directly involved in the teaching and learning process. Their primary responsibility is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and positively influence student behavior (Chew & Cerbin, 2021; Katyeudo & de Souza, 2022; Kim, Lee, & Cho, 2022; Talebizadeh, Hosseingholizadeh, & Bellibaş, 2021). Teacher performance, therefore, refers to the measurable outcomes—both in quality and quantity—of their professional duties, which are significantly shaped by the principal's leadership and management. Performance includes not only core responsibilities such as instruction and student guidance but also additional duties assigned by the principal, including research, community service, and other educational support activities. These tasks provide the basis for assessing teacher performance. Evaluations typically consider achievement in four main areas: instructional practice, professional development, student guidance, and contributions to school-wide learning support (Flamand et al., 2024; Mystakidis, Fragkaki, & Filippousis, 2021; Zhao, Zhao, & Li, 2023).

There are many phenomena in the field, such as teachers only teaching but lacking in teaching preparation, which is a factor in the lack of attention of a principal in directing and developing teachers to improve teacher performance. School principals as leaders of educational institutions have five competencies, namely: academic, managerial, personal, entrepreneurial, and professional. Many school principals do not understand Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007 concerning School Principal Standards. Therefore, the role of school principals needs to be more innovative so that teacher performance can be improved. Several studies related to principal management in improving performance were reported by (Agustina, Kristiawan, & Tobari, 2020; Amini, Marliani, Elfrianto, & Kemal, 2022; Anggraini, Susita, & Wiradendi, 2023; Ma' Arif, Mitra Zuana, & Sirojuddin, 2022), who concluded that effective principal management helps in improving principal performance. This means that a principal who is able to plan, organize, direct, and evaluate school programs effectively, as well as create a conducive work climate, will encourage teachers to work more professionally, motivated, and responsible in carrying out their duties. Thus, good principal management is an important factor in creating a work environment that supports improving teacher performance.

Previous studies (Ahmad Asrin, 2021; Bria, Seuk, & Malli, 2023; Sartina, Ahyani, & Rohana, 2023) have consistently shown that effective principal management is positively correlated with improved teacher performance. These findings emphasize the importance of core managerial functions—such as planning, organizing, and evaluating—in fostering a conducive work environment that supports teacher growth and educational quality. However, a critical review of the literature reveals that most of these studies focus on primary and general secondary education, which differ significantly in curriculum orientation and institutional demands compared to vocational education.

This gap in the literature underscores a limited understanding of how management and leadership—particularly transformational leadership—are applied in the context of vocational high schools (SMK). SMKs face distinctive challenges, especially those related to competency-based learning, industry collaboration, and the integration of practical skills into the curriculum. These complexities necessitate innovative leadership approaches that align educational goals with industrial standards and workforce readiness.

Despite recognition of the principal's role in shaping teacher performance, research specifically addressing how SMK principals manage, motivate, and support teachers remains scarce. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the managerial practices of vocational high school principals. By focusing on the unique context of SMKs, the research provides a more targeted understanding of how leadership practices affect teacher performance and, ultimately, educational outcomes. This study seeks to analyze the implementation of school principal management strategies in improving teacher performance within vocational high schools.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, focusing on present-day conditions in two vocational high schools (SMK) in Majalengka Regency. The primary aim is to explore the principal's management practices in improving teacher performance. The unit of analysis comprises individuals and groups directly involved in the educational process, including principals, vice principals, teachers, and students. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure relevance and depth in addressing the study's objectives. The principal was chosen due to his strategic role in planning and implementing school management policies, while teachers were selected as they are directly affected by these managerial practices. Additionally, vice principals for curriculum and ICT integration, as well as students, were included to provide broader perspectives on the implementation and impact of leadership in vocational settings. The study involved one principal and a group of teachers selected based on the need for in-depth information, along with 10 students from each school.

Ethical research practices were strictly observed throughout the study. Before the data collection process began, all participants received a thorough explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and potential benefits. Written informed consent was obtained from both teachers and students, affirming their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any point without repercussions. To ensure confidentiality, all data collected was anonymized.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on George R. Terry's management theory, which views management as a unique process involving planning, organizing, motivating, and supervising to achieve specific goals through the effective use of human and other resources. To obtain rich and reliable data, the researcher acted as the primary instrument and engaged directly in the field. Data were collected through a combination of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

Data analysis followed the qualitative procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman, involving three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data from interviews, observations, and document analysis were systematically reduced to extract relevant information aligned with the study's focus. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narrative form, allowing for the identification of patterns and the emergence of meaningful insights. Conclusions were drawn based on consistency, contextual relevance, and depth of findings, characteristic of a case study approach. To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, data validity was maintained through source triangulation and methodological triangulation, addressing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Principal Management in Improving Teacher Performance at Majalengka Vocational School*

3.1.1 **Principal Planning for Improving Teacher Performance in Vocational Schools**

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation studies, the Principal's planning to improve teacher performance at Majalengka Vocational School begins with the preparation of the Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategy (VMTS) with the elements involved being the Principal, Deputy Principal, teacher representatives, Head of Administration and the foundation.

The principal's management approach at the Majalengka Vocational School in planning teacher instruction and other school programs aligns with teachers' expectations through empathetic and strategic actions. These include identifying gaps, challenges, and recurring issues commonly faced by homeroom and subject teachers. The principal adopts a participatory approach in designing these plans, ensuring teacher involvement in the process. The semester program outlines the objectives and targets to be achieved within the term, detailing core competencies, subject content, learning indicators, expected learning experiences, time allocation, and assessment methods, all of which are compiled in the annual program (prota). Additionally, the academic calendar is formulated through collaborative discussions by the curriculum development team, led by the Deputy Head of Curriculum. The calendar is structured based on the principles of efficiency and effectiveness in supporting teaching and learning processes, ensuring that instructional goals are met in a productive manner.

Based on the results of observations made by researchers, in terms of the physical environment at Majalengka Vocational School it looks good in creating conducive working climate conditions. The work climate at Majalengka Vocational School is seen from non-physical aspects in the initial observations that researchers made, it can be seen from the school's efforts to foster a sense of loyalty for all school members, a sense of kinship that is felt among school members, as well as a sense of pride in the organization, one of which is the introduction of organizational identity.

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation studies, it was found that The principal's planning in improving teacher performance at Majalengka Vocational School, the principal always involves all teachers and employees in participatory decision making to determine whether students are promoted or not, guidance policies, or class division policies, and teaching schedules. The principal also involves teachers in empowering the School Committee. In planning teacher learning and school elements in accordance with the teachers' expectations, this is taken by the Principal through sympathetic steps, including identifying deficiencies, weaknesses, difficulties, or school problems that class teachers and subject teachers often have or experience. In addition, the Principal establishes a teacher performance improvement program that is needed to overcome the shortcomings, weaknesses, and difficulties that classroom and subject teachers often have or experience. Formulate program objectives for improving teacher performance capabilities that are expected to be achieved at the end of the development program

3.1.2 **Organizing School Principals to Improve Teacher Performance at Vocational School**

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation studies, one form of school organization is an organizational structure that describes the position of human resources in the school, which is adapted to each main function. The principal's organization in improving teacher performance in schools at Majalengka Vocational School is carried out by making schedules for teachers to implement learning. Then, coaching is carried out in making learning tools. The distribution of teaching tasks is adjusted to the structure and content of the curriculum at Majalengka Vocational School, and attention is paid to the qualifications and competencies of teachers who are civil servants and those who are not civil servants.

Based on the results of the interview,

The implementation of the Principal in improving teacher performance at SMK Majalengka, efforts to improve teacher performance that were realized in the form of improving teacher performance such as improving teacher professional skills and improving teacher placement and assignments according to their expertise. Among the programs implemented that are directly related to improving teacher resources, for example, teacher academic competence in the form of their level of education

At Majalengka Vocational School, the principal is supported by a team of deputy principals who assist in the delegation and execution of tasks across various school functions. Task assignments are determined based on the individual competencies and experience of each teacher. The principal holds full responsibility for all school operations and fulfills multiple roles—as a manager, educator, leader, motivator, and innovator. To ensure effective school governance, both internal and external stakeholders are engaged, with deputy principals playing a vital role in assisting the principal across all school activities. Their responsibilities include planning, developing, and implementing activity programs, organizing staffing, coordinating tasks, conducting evaluations, supervising processes, and identifying and collecting relevant school data.

The school's organizational structure reflects a clear division of responsibilities. It includes the Deputy Principal for Academic Affairs, Deputy Principal for Student Affairs, Deputy Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure, and Deputy Principal for Public Relations. Additional roles within the structure include subject teachers, class teachers, the guidance and counseling unit, librarian, laboratory staff, and administrative personnel. This well-defined structure supports the overall efficiency and effectiveness of school management.

3.2 Principal Implementation in Improving Teacher Performance at Majalengka Vocational School

3.2.1 Socialization

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation analysis, the principal's efforts to enhance teacher performance at Majalengka Vocational School are reflected in several key strategies, such as strengthening teachers' professional competencies and ensuring appropriate placement and assignment based on their areas of expertise. The success of these initiatives largely depends on the dissemination and communication process led by the principal following the completion of the planning phase. One of the core programs aimed at improving teacher quality involves the development of academic qualifications, which is formally communicated to teachers to ensure alignment with the school's overall goals and capacity-building strategies

3.2.2 RPP Preparation Training

Based on the observations, interviews and documentation studies at Majalengka Vocational School, the suitability of the teacher's performance areas with the subjects taught (link and mach) is good because it is important to pay attention to. This will have a direct impact on the quality of learning and improving teacher performance in schools. The implementation of the principal's leadership in improving teacher performance at Majalengka Vocational School is held through various curriculum workshops as well as training in making lesson plans, seminars, or special education as an effort to improve the skills (Pedagogical Competency and Social Competence) of teachers at Majalengka Vocational School.

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and document analysis, it was found that the principal of Majalengka Vocational School consistently encourages teachers and staff to uphold discipline in performing their duties. This is particularly evident during teacher council meetings, where the principal frequently motivates educators to maintain professionalism and commitment in the workplace.

The implementation of principal management aimed at improving teacher performance at SMK Majalengka is primarily carried out through two key programs: the division of work responsibilities

and a structured discipline program. These efforts reflect the management functions described in George R. Terry's theory, particularly in terms of organizing, motivating, and supervising. One of the principal's routine strategies includes organizing a biannual construction meeting, which serves as a platform for performance evaluation and planning. Additionally, the principal regularly facilitates In-House Training (IHT) sessions and professional development programs, such as teacher education and training workshops, to enhance teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies.

These practices align with the views of educational experts, including Gaol, who emphasizes that school leaders can improve teacher performance by directing staff to engage in educational and training activities, such as seminars and workshops (Indrastuti, Rahmat, & Rahmat, 2022; Lumban Gaol et al., 2023). Similarly, research by Adung et al. (2021) and Untung & Rohayana (2023) supports the notion that principals enhance teacher competence by conducting continuous coaching and involving teachers in various professional development activities, including IHT, curriculum workshops, lesson plan (RPP) preparation, and vocational internship training (Prakerin).

3.3 Evaluation of the Principal in Improving Teacher Performance at Majalengka Vocational School

3.3.1 Attendance

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation studies, the Principal's efforts at Majalengka Vocational School are to improve teacher performance, by evaluating teacher performance. The principal always collaborates with supervisors to pay attention to and guide teacher performance, including teacher competence (pedagogical competence, social competence, personality competence, and professional competence). Teacher presence is the first point that is an indicator of teacher performance because it is related to discipline and efforts to achieve quality learning.

3.3.2 Understanding School Policy

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation studies at Majalengka Vocational School, it was found that one part of the Principal's management supervision in improving teacher performance was carried out by providing understanding and motivation to teachers in general through routine briefing activities carried out after every ceremony, and through Motivational Seminars once a year. In a briefing that is carried out routinely, the principal always encourages teachers to work as well as possible. Apart from that, providing evaluations in the previous week is also a form of motivation by the school principal so that performance can be even more optimal in the following weeks. The principal provides an understanding of school policies that emphasize the importance of discipline. The principal directly checks teacher discipline by inspecting the classroom during the learning process. If a class is empty because the teacher is absent without prior notification, the principal usually enters directly or orders the picket officer to enter if the absent teacher notifies him in advance.

3.3.3. Teaching and Learning Practices

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation analysis, teacher performance at Majalengka Vocational School can be assessed through the quality of teaching and learning practices. Teachers are observed to provide differentiated instruction, including remedial and enrichment services tailored to students' individual potentials, developmental levels, and learning needs. A variety of instructional methods are employed, such as lectures, question-and-answer sessions, demonstrations, and discussions, reflecting a responsive and student-centered approach to learning. These teaching practices serve as key indicators in the principal's evaluation of teacher performance.

The principal plays an active role in monitoring and evaluating teacher performance to ensure continuous improvement. One aspect of this effort includes assessing the effectiveness of teacher performance enhancement programs and planning follow-up initiatives for both homeroom and

subject teachers involved in school-based educational management. The principal's monitoring activities are integrated into daily routines and formal school programs. For instance, the principal reviews teacher and staff attendance logs daily, oversees the implementation of teaching and learning activities, and maintains a personal logbook documenting the daily execution of leadership duties. This logbook serves as a formal record of school management practices.

These findings are supported by previous research (Timor, 2018), which highlights the significant role of principals in driving school success. A principal's leadership encompasses staff supervision, student engagement, discipline enforcement, curriculum management, infrastructure oversight, professional development planning, and budget control. These responsibilities are critical to developing teacher quality and fostering effective and efficient learning outcomes across the institution.

3.4 Obstacles/Problems for School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance at Majalengka Vocational School

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation studies with several teachers at Majalengka Vocational School, including the following policies that have become complaints among teachers: Orderliness and discipline in carrying out tasks, School administration discipline, and Distribution of tasks in accordance with teacher competence. Some of the things that contract teachers complain about regarding the Principal's policies really need to be corrected and actually implemented. Another obstacle to the management of Majalengka Vocational School principals in improving teacher performance is that there are teachers who do not meet educational qualifications. The Principal's management really determines quality, without the leadership of a good Principal the quality improvement process cannot be carried out and realized. The principal's leadership impact lies not solely in issuing directives, but more significantly in serving as a source of motivation and inspiration that encourages teachers and staff to foster their initiative and creativity, ultimately enhancing their performance. The principal, as a leader, must have abilities related to fostering employee discipline and motivation. According to the researcher's view, the principal at Majalengka Vocational School is a leader who applies a democratic attitude, respects teachers and is always open and ready to listen to the problems faced by teachers. The democratic nuance also has an impact on the pattern of harmonious and family relationships in the school environment, cooperation teamwork solidity always colors the steps in carrying out every task and obligation. This creates cohesiveness and close relationships between the Principal and the members, including teaching staff, staff, and students.

3.5 Principal's Solution for Improving Teacher Performance at Majalengka Vocational School

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, the principal at Majalengka Vocational School demonstrates a democratic leadership style characterized by respect, openness, and approachability. Teachers report feeling valued and comfortable discussing challenges, knowing the principal is always willing to listen and assist. This environment fosters mutual respect and open communication, allowing teachers and staff to express concerns, share opinions, and ask questions without fear of reprimand. As a leader, the principal is not merely an authoritative figure but embodies the qualities of a facilitator and motivator, encouraging collaboration and inclusive decision-making.

Field data show that the leadership model practiced at Majalengka Vocational School emphasizes participation and the absorption of input from subordinates. During staff meetings and school work planning sessions, teachers are actively involved in designing programs that support educational improvement. This participatory approach was evident, for example, when the principal encouraged collective discussions before making decisions and prioritized objective input from all stakeholders. Communication between the principal and staff occurs regularly, both in groups and one-on-one settings, reinforcing a culture of shared responsibility.

In carrying out managerial functions, the principal effectively mobilizes and influences all educational personnel to improve their performance. Strategies employed include strengthening

discipline, offering motivation, and providing incentives or recognition for outstanding work. These efforts position the principal as a driving force in teacher development and institutional success. The principal's leadership in planning is also aligned with George R. Terry's planning theory, which emphasizes the importance of developing a clear vision, mission, goals, strategic and operational plans, and programs that foster a positive working climate. The program development process at the school involves exploration and active input from teachers, staff, and other relevant stakeholders, ensuring that planning is both inclusive and responsive to on-the-ground needs.

Teacher performance at Majalengka Vocational School is influenced by both internal and external factors, including discipline, creativity, sense of responsibility, and the example set by leadership. These factors vary from one individual to another, and performance differences are typically linked to two main sources: individual characteristics and the work environment. While individual traits affect how teachers perform and adapt, work situation factors shape whether they can realize their full potential. A supportive environment, guided by strong leadership, significantly enhances the likelihood of optimal performance.

The principal's management reflects a high level of accountability in mobilizing school resources to cultivate work ethic, creativity, and productivity. Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational effectiveness, and the success of a school is often determined by the quality of its leader. A successful principal must be able to manage the institution strategically and motivate staff to work constructively toward shared goals. This includes not only day-to-day administration but also the ability to influence others positively and guide them toward purposeful collaboration.

In terms of organizing functions, the principal has implemented management practices in accordance with Terry's organizing theory. These include the establishment of a clear organizational structure, curriculum planning, co-curricular programming, teaching schedules, and defined job descriptions. These initiatives are essential in grouping, assigning, and coordinating various school activities, allocating human resources effectively, and establishing clear lines of authority and responsibility. Through these organizing efforts, the principal ensures that school operations run smoothly and that all staff members understand their roles in contributing to the school's mission.

Additionally, this study reveals that the principal plays a central role in shaping the school's vision and translating it into strategic programs. This aligns with Selznick's leadership theory, which outlines four core leadership functions: defining the institution's mission and acting as a visionary; guiding goal attainment through strategic decision-making; maintaining organizational integrity by aligning internal and external perceptions; and managing internal conflicts that may arise. The findings suggest that the principal at Majalengka Vocational School not only fulfills administrative duties but also serves as a strategic leader committed to fostering teacher growth and enhancing overall educational quality.

Table 1. Summary of interview results

GR Terry's Management Functions	Key Findings	Evidence/Direct Quotes (Interviews/Observations)
Planning	The principal formulates the school vision, mission, and work programs	"We always involve teachers in preparing the annual school programs."
Organizing	Task distribution based on competencies and organizational structure	"Tasks are clear; I am responsible for curriculum matters."
Actuating	Conducting regular training, coaching, and motivating teachers	"The principal regularly holds workshops to improve our professionalism."

Controlling	Monitoring attendance, evaluating teaching, and supervising programs	“Every month, the principal conducts class evaluations.”
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The findings of this study reveal that the principal at Majalengka Vocational School effectively applies the four core management functions as conceptualized by George R. Terry: planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. In the planning phase, the principal actively involves teachers in the development of the school’s vision, mission, and annual work program, reflecting a collaborative and strategic approach. This participatory model promotes ownership and alignment among staff, as confirmed by teacher statements emphasizing their inclusion in planning processes. Organizational effectiveness is demonstrated through the clear division of responsibilities based on teacher competencies, allowing for optimized task execution and role clarity. The implementation function is reflected in the regular provision of professional development opportunities such as training sessions and workshops, designed to enhance teacher capacity and motivation. Lastly, the control function is exercised through routine class evaluations and performance monitoring, enabling continuous improvement and accountability. Collectively, these practices illustrate the principal’s comprehensive application of managerial principles to strengthen teacher performance and support school goals.

These results further underscore the integrated implementation of management functions, with each aspect contributing to an environment conducive to educational advancement. Strategic planning is reinforced through inclusive decision-making, while organizing efforts ensure operational efficiency and coherence. Actuating functions are made visible through capacity-building initiatives, and supervisory mechanisms uphold accountability and maintain performance standards. This systematic alignment with Terry’s framework reflects a well-rounded leadership approach tailored to the specific context of vocational education.

The findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the significant role of principal management in enhancing teacher performance. Research by Agustina, Kristiawan, and Tobari (2020), Amini et al. (2022), and Anggraini et al. (2023) concludes that effective leadership—especially when grounded in managerial competence—positively influences teacher productivity and school performance. These parallels indicate that the practices observed at Majalengka Vocational School align with broader patterns identified in other educational contexts. However, this study contributes further nuance by focusing on vocational high schools, where leadership must also address industry-aligned competencies and practical skill development.

Comparative analysis with prior research reveals both alignment and contextual distinctions. For instance, while Agustina et al. (2020) emphasize participatory management strategies similar to those found in this study, the vocational school setting introduces unique challenges, such as the need for synchronized learning with industrial demands and competency-based curricula. This highlights the importance of adapting leadership strategies to specific institutional environments. By contextualizing management practices, the findings provide deeper insight into the role of leadership in shaping not just academic outcomes, but also workforce readiness among vocational school graduates.

Additional support for these conclusions is found in the work of Pardosi and Utari (2022), Shen et al. (2021), and Zaini et al. (2023), who stress the impact of transformational and instructional leadership on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Principals who provide consistent academic guidance, emotional support, and moral leadership contribute significantly to teacher motivation and professional growth. A school culture that values discipline, innovation, and collaboration further enhances this impact, although successful implementation is often contingent on external factors such as institutional resources, policy support, and community engagement.

The theoretical implications of this study align with Bush and Glover (2014), who argue that effective school leadership depends on the principal’s capacity to integrate key managerial functions. Similarly, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) emphasize the importance of systematic leadership practices, such as participatory planning and instructional supervision, in influencing teacher

engagement and student learning outcomes. These findings reinforce the instructional leadership model, which positions the principal as a catalyst for cultural and organizational transformation through structured and strategic management.

From a practical perspective, the study highlights the need to strengthen the managerial capacity of school leaders, particularly in vocational education settings. The principal's ability to apply strategic management principles plays a crucial role in shaping a professional, adaptive, and quality-oriented learning environment. These insights suggest that leadership development programs and policy frameworks should prioritize the cultivation of skills in planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. A leadership model grounded in strategic and instructional management offers a solid foundation for driving continuous improvement in teacher performance and enhancing educational outcomes in vocational schools.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the management practices of vocational school principals in improving teacher performance are aligned with the four management functions outlined in George R. Terry's theory—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating—and also reflect the operational standards of effective school leadership. The principal's role is evident in strategic planning efforts, organizational structuring, implementation of professional development initiatives such as in-house training, curriculum workshops, and discipline programs, as well as in the ongoing evaluation of teacher performance through attendance monitoring and classroom supervision. However, the research also identified several limitations, including challenges related to inconsistent teacher qualifications, lack of discipline among some educators, and dissatisfaction with certain school policies. These issues highlight the need for stronger resource support, targeted professional development, and inclusive decision-making practices. To address these limitations, principals should foster open communication with staff, encourage consensus-based solutions, and provide opportunities for teachers to upgrade their qualifications. Future research is recommended to examine the effects of resource allocation on the effectiveness of school leadership and to explore innovative approaches for improving teacher discipline, motivation, and performance within the unique context of vocational education.

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