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## THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL CULTURE, AND WORK MOTIVATION ON THE PROFESSIONALISM OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Ninik Debariyani<sup>1</sup>, Nurkolis<sup>2</sup>, Rasiman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Universitas PGRI Semarang; Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail\*; debariyani@gmail.com

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of school principal leadership, school culture, and work motivation on teacher professionalism in public elementary schools. The population of this study comprised all public elementary school teachers in the Gunung Wungkal District, totaling 155 teachers, from which a sample of 112 respondents was selected used Slovin formula. Data were collected through questionnaires and documentation. The data analysis techniques employed included descriptive data analysis and hypothesis testing, which encompassed simple and multiple linear regression analyses. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. The results: (1) principals' leadership has a significant partial effect on teacher professionalism, with a correlation coefficient of 0.676 and a contribution of 45.7%; (2) school culture has a significant effect on teacher professionalism, with a correlation coefficient of 0.621 and a contribution of 38.6%; (3) work motivation has a significant effect on teacher professionalism, with a correlation coefficient of 0.615 and a contribution of 37.8%; and (4) principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on teacher professionalism, with a correlation coefficient of 0.763 (strong category) and a contribution of 58.2%.

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### Keywords

Leadership, School Culture, Motivation, Professionalism.



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## INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is a fundamental requirement that can no longer be postponed, especially in response to increasingly fierce competition in the era of globalization (Goodwin, 2021; Styana, 2024). Nevertheless, the facts show that teacher professionalism has not yet fully met the established targets and expectations (Cai et al., 2022; Juvonen & Toom, 2023). Some teachers have not yet adopted a professional attitude in the classroom and within the school environment. In the classroom, many teachers still rely on lecture-based teaching methods, with the teacher as the sole source of learning (Fufa et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022). This indicates that teachers' professionalism in developing innovative and contemporary teaching methods needs to be improved.

This situation is also evident at Gunungwungkal Public Elementary School. Results from brief interviews with the principal indicate that many teachers are accustomed to relying solely on textbooks as teaching materials and learning resources. Consequently, student activities are limited to memorizing concepts and fail to connect them to real-world contexts. These findings are further supported by an assessment of teacher professionalism at Gunungwungkal Public Elementary School. The assessment results indicate that teachers still face challenges in designing and developing learning assessments. Additionally, teachers' ability to design and develop learning activities has not yet reached its full potential. The management of the learning process and mastery of subject matter also require special attention as part of efforts to optimize the enhancement of teacher professionalism.

Teachers' suboptimal professionalism inevitably limits the achievement of learning outcomes. Limited professionalism affects both the quality of instruction and the character traits instilled through learning. To date, the principal at Gunungwungkal Public Elementary School has implemented a collaborative and adaptive leadership model. Furthermore, school culture also contributes to the development of professionalism, as it reflects how all members of the academic community interact, behave, and resolve issues across all aspects of school life (Ismail et al., 2022). The school also provides appropriate learning motivation to maintain students' enthusiasm and motivation in their studies (Harris et al., 2022).

Numerous previous studies have been conducted to enhance the professionalism of elementary school teachers. First, a study (Susanto et al., 2024) explains that academic supervision and KKG activities serve as solutions for enhancing teacher professionalism. Second, a study (Hendrizal et al., 2024) demonstrates that teacher professionalism can be effectively enhanced

through KKG (Teacher Working Group) activities. Third, a study by (Sobri et al., 2023) explains that teacher professionalism can be enhanced through the development of scientific writing skills. Fourth, research conducted by (Lubis, 2017) explains that KKG can also improve teacher competence and professionalism. Fifth, research conducted by (Hajar et al., 2025) found that certification and competency strengthening are factors that can influence teacher professionalism.

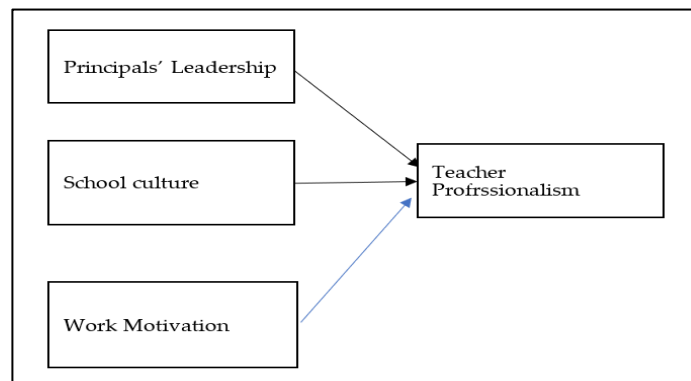
The five previous studies have limitations, such as a focus primarily on academic supervision and KKG activities. Additionally, other studies have focused solely on efforts to improve scientific writing skills. Thus, this study offers a novel approach by analyzing the impact of principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation within a structured framework. Consequently, this study can provide more structured results by analyzing various factors simultaneously. Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to further examine the effects of principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation on the professionalism of public elementary school teachers in the Gunung Wungkal District, Pati Regency. Based on the foregoing background, this study aims to further examine the effects of principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation on the professionalism of public elementary school teachers in the Gunung Wungkal District, Pati Regency.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Approach and Design**

This study employs a quantitative research approach. According to (Sugiyono, 2022), quantitative research is defined as a research method grounded in the philosophy of positivism, used to investigate a particular population or sample. Data are collected using research instruments, and the data analysis is quantitative or statistical in nature. Furthermore, Sugiyono (2022) explains that associative research refers to a research problem formulation that seeks to examine the relationships between two or more variables. In this study, an associative research strategy is applied to identify the extent to which the independent variables (X) influence the dependent variable (Y), both partially and simultaneously.

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in the Gunung Wungkal District, Pati Regency, which constituted the research population, while the sample was drawn from a portion of this population. The quantitative research method employed aims to test the predetermined hypotheses. The research design is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research Design

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study comprised all public elementary school teachers in the Gunung Wungkal District. This population included both civil servants (PNS) and non-civil servants (Non-PNS) teachers, totaling 155 teachers. The sample consisted of a portion of the public elementary school teachers in the Gunung Wungkal District. The determination of the sample size was based on a sample size determination table. The sampling technique employed in this study used the Slovin formula, resulting in a sample of 112 teachers.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Quantitative data collection techniques are methods used to gather data in numerical or statistical form. In this study, data were collected using a questionnaire. This method is commonly applied in survey research as it enables researchers to reach a large number of respondents simultaneously. The primary advantage of using questionnaires lies in their efficiency in collecting data quickly. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The items were developed based on indicators derived from each research variable. These indicators served as reference points for constructing the instrument items in the form of statements. Subsequently, the indicators of each variable under investigation were elaborated into measurable questionnaire items.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data processing in this study was conducted using a computer-assisted approach with the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26 software. This was intended to obtain accurate calculation results and to facilitate data processing, thereby ensuring efficiency and precision.

### **Prerequisite Tests:**

- a. The normality test is a procedure used to determine whether the data originate from a normally distributed population. In this study, data normality was tested using the Lilliefors test with a significance level of 5%.
- b. The linearity test is essential to determine whether the linear regression model applied is appropriate for the data. If the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is linear, a linear regression model can be used for prediction and estimation purposes.
- c. This test aims to examine whether a regression model contains high or perfect correlations among independent variables. The presence or absence of multicollinearity in the regression model was identified using tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

### **Hypothesis Testing**

- a. Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. In this study, the simple linear regression equation applied was:  $Y = a + bX$
- b. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine relationships involving more than one independent or predictor variable with a dependent variable. The purpose of this analysis was to predict the value of the dependent variable based on known values of the independent variables. The regression model used in this study was:  $Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3$ .

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### **a. Prerequisite Tests**

##### **1) Normality Test**

In this study, the normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The criterion applied was that, for a two-tailed test, a significance value greater than 0.05 indicates a normal distribution. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test results show that the residual data have an Asymp. Sig value of  $0.159 > 0.05$ , indicating that the residuals of teacher professionalism are normally distributed. The principal leadership variable has an Asymp. Sig value of  $0.104 > 0.05$ , which indicates that the data are normally distributed. The school culture variable shows an Asymp. Sig value of  $0.200 > 0.05$ , suggesting a normal distribution. Similarly, the work motivation variable has an Asymp. Sig value of  $0.200 > 0.05$ , indicating that the residual data are normally

distributed.

2) Multicollinearity Test

The tolerance values for  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and  $X_3$  are 0.625, 0.549, and 0.476, respectively, all of which are greater than 0.10. Meanwhile, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and  $X_3$  are 1.600, 2.178, and 2.102, respectively, all of which are less than 10. These results indicate that multicollinearity does not occur in the regression model.

3) Linearity Test

The significance value for the linearity test between teacher professionalism and principals' leadership is 0.029, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is a linear relationship between teacher professionalism and principals' leadership.

**b. Hypothesis test**

1) Effect of Principals' Leadership on Teacher Professionalism

The simple regression equation obtained is:  $Y = 66.318 + 0.351X_1$ . The constant value of 66.318 indicates that teacher professionalism is 66.318 when principals' leadership is equal to zero. The regression coefficient of 0.351 shows that a 1 percent increase in principals' leadership leads to an increase of 0.351 in teacher professionalism. The significance value (sig) of 0.000 is far below 0.05, indicating that principals' leadership has a significant effect on teacher professionalism. The correlation coefficient between principals' leadership and teacher professionalism is 0.676, which falls into the "strong" category based on the correlation coefficient guidelines. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.457, indicating that principals' leadership contributes 45.7% to teacher professionalism, while the remaining 54.3% is influenced by other variables.

2) Effect of School Culture on Teacher Professionalism

The simple regression equation obtained is:  $Y = 62.295 + 0.431X_2$ . The constant value of 62.295 indicates that teacher professionalism is 62.295 when school culture is equal to zero. The regression coefficient of 0.431 indicates that a 1 percent increase in school culture leads to an increase of 0.431 in teacher professionalism. The correlation coefficient between school culture and teacher professionalism is 0.621, which is categorized as "strong." The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.386, indicating that school culture contributes 38.6% to teacher professionalism, while the remaining 61.4% is explained by other variables.

### 3) Effect of Work Motivation on Teacher Professionalism

The simple regression equation obtained is:  $Y = 69.927 + 0.339X_3$ . The constant value of 69.927 indicates that teacher professionalism is 69.927 when work motivation is equal to zero. The regression coefficient of 0.339 indicates that an increase in work motivation results in an increase of 0.339 in teacher professionalism. The correlation coefficient between work motivation and teacher professionalism is 0.615, which is classified as "strong." The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.378, indicating that work motivation contributes 37.8% to teacher professionalism, while the remaining 62.2% is influenced by other variables.

### 4) Simultaneous Effect of Principals' Leadership, School Culture, and Work Motivation on Teacher Professionalism

The multiple regression equation obtained is:  $Y = 50.980 + 0.190X_1 + 0.295X_2 + 0.356X_3$ . This regression equation indicates that when principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation are held constant, teacher professionalism has a constant value of 50.980. The correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) for principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation simultaneously affecting teacher professionalism is 0.763, which falls into the "strong" category. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted  $R^2$ ) is 0.582, indicating that principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation collectively contribute 58.2% to teacher professionalism, while the remaining 41.8% is explained by other variables.

## Discussions

The results and findings of the study indicate that school principal leadership, school culture, and work motivation have a significant influence and a strong correlation with the professionalism of elementary school teachers, both individually and collectively, with a combined contribution. Principals' leadership in their role as managers was perceived by respondents as the weakest dimension compared to other leadership dimensions. Respondents generally viewed principals as having adequately demonstrated competencies related to designing educational supervision programs, implementing supervision, and carrying out follow-up supervision activities. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by (Ameli et al., 2024; Satria et al., 2024), which reported that supervision encourages teachers to become more effective, creates better and more efficient learning environments, and increases teachers' enthusiasm in performing their duties.

Statistical analysis revealed that the correlation coefficient between principals' leadership and teacher professionalism was 0.676, which falls within the strong category. This finding is in line with the study by Amelia et al. (2022), which demonstrated that principals' leadership through guidance, motivation, and supervision can enhance teacher professionalism and subsequently improve the learning process. Teachers who possess a high level of professionalism continuously strive to improve their performance in accordance with established objectives. Effective supervision by principals plays a crucial role in fostering professionalism in teachers' instructional responsibilities (Desrianti & Asmendri, 2024; Siagian et al., 2025). The regression equation obtained was  $Y = 66.318 + 0.351X_1$ , indicating that improvements in principals' leadership are associated with increases in teacher professionalism. Conversely, ineffective leadership may lead to a decline in teacher professionalism (DeMatthews et al., 2022; Simmons-Beauchamp & Sharpe, 2022). These results are consistent with the findings of He et al. (2024), which revealed a positive and significant relationship between principals' leadership and teacher professionalism.

Research data indicate that respondents perceived their colleagues as being cooperative and mutually supportive. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Risnawati (2018), which reported that the highest average score for job satisfaction was found in the dimension related to supportive coworkers. Consequently, it can be concluded that MI teachers in Tanah Laut experienced satisfaction with their colleagues. Statistical testing showed a correlation coefficient of 0.621 between school culture and teacher professionalism, which is categorized as strong. This result aligns with the study by (Xia et al., 2023) and (Kuru & Tabancalı, 2023), which reported a strong correlation between school culture and teacher professionalism. The values embedded in school culture should therefore be a focal point and be harmoniously cultivated by schools. In other words, to develop high-quality human resources within a school, it is essential to first establish positive school cultural aspects among teachers (Karoso et al., 2024; Permatasari & Tandiyuk, 2023).

The regression equation obtained was  $Y = 62.295 + 0.431X_2$ , indicating that improvements in school culture lead to increased teacher professionalism. This finding supports Hasibuan's (2013) view that school culture reflects a positive emotional attitude toward work, characterized by work morale, discipline, and performance (Segarayoga et al., 2025; Selvia et al., 2024). Individuals with strong school culture tend to demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction with their organization. This study is also consistent with other research, which concluded that school culture significantly influenced teacher professionalism in public elementary schools (Heriyanto, 2024).

The research data indicate that respondents perceived a lack of support from both superiors and colleagues in efforts to enhance their competencies and career development. This condition is attributed to unequal task distribution among teachers, resulting in limited opportunities for some teachers to engage in professional development activities. These findings are consistent with the study by Bureau et al. (2022), which identified support as the lowest indicator of work motivation. Achieving organizational goals requires support from leaders or managers; similarly, school objectives can only be attained when all stakeholders collaborate and support shared goals.

Statistical analysis showed that the correlation coefficient between work motivation and teacher professionalism was 0.615, indicating a strong relationship. The regression equation obtained was  $Y = 69.927 + 0.339X_3$ , suggesting that increases in work motivation are associated with improvements in teacher professionalism. These findings are consistent with studies by (Prayogo et al., 2022) and (Setyorini & Khuriyah, 2023), which reported that work motivation has a positive effect on teacher professionalism. Although work motivation is an internal condition that cannot be directly observed, it can be measured through teachers' perceptions of the organizational climate, which significantly influences their performance. High levels of work motivation are therefore essential for enhancing teacher professionalism (Talwelkar & Uppal, 2025; Taqwim, 2024).

Based on the descriptive analysis, teacher professionalism in public elementary schools in the Gunung Wungkal District was categorized as moderately good. Respondents identified extrinsic dimensions as the weakest compared to work motivation and other dimensions. The findings further indicate that school culture and work motivation have not yet optimally enhanced teacher professionalism in carrying out their duties. The correlation coefficient for principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation collectively influencing teacher professionalism was 0.763, which falls within the strong category. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted  $R^2$ ) was 0.582, indicating that these three variables jointly account for 58.2% of the variance in teacher professionalism, while the remaining 41.8% is explained by other variables.

The resulting regression equation was  $Y = 50.986 + 0.190X_1 + 0.295X_2 + 0.356X_3$ . Teacher professionalism refers to teachers' comprehensive ability to perform their duties responsibly, effectively, and sustainably, as reflected in strong pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies, as well as high commitment. The findings of this study are consistent with other research that indicates a significant combined effect of principals' leadership and school culture on teacher professionalism in public elementary schools (Setiyanti et al., 2025).

Furthermore, this study aligns with the research conducted by Iskandar et al. (2023) and Pratiwi & Warlizasusi (2023), which reported a joint effect of principals' leadership and work motivation on teacher professionalism. These findings are further reinforced by Era et al. (2022), who concluded that principals' leadership and work motivation significantly affect teacher professionalism. Consequently, it is recommended that principals optimize their leadership practices, particularly in strengthening supervisory functions related to the learning process (Ayumi & Nasution, 2025; Fatimah et al., 2023)

## CONCLUSION

This study was conducted at Gunungwungkal Public Elementary School. The findings of this study can be summarized as follows: 1) There is a significant effect of principals' leadership on teacher professionalism, as indicated by the simple regression equation  $Y = 66.318 + 0.351X_1$ . The correlation strength is 0.676, which falls within the strong category, with a contribution of 45.7%. The remaining 54.3% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study; 2) There is a significant effect of school culture on teacher professionalism, as expressed by the simple regression equation  $Y = 62.295 + 0.431X_2$ . The correlation coefficient is 0.621, categorized as strong, with a contribution of 38.6%. The remaining 61.4% is attributable to other factors; 3) There is a positive effect of work motivation on teacher professionalism, as shown by the simple regression equation  $Y = 69.927 + 0.339X_3$ . The correlation coefficient is 0.615, which is considered strong, with a contribution of 37.8%. The remaining 62.2% is influenced by other variables; and 4). Principals' leadership, school culture, and work motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on teacher professionalism, as indicated by the multiple regression equation  $Y = 50.980 + 0.190X_1 + 0.295X_2 + 0.356X_3$ . The correlation coefficient is 0.763, categorized as strong, with a combined contribution of 58.2%. The remaining 41.8% is influenced by other variables not included in this model.

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