

Enhancing Job Satisfaction: The Role of Transformational Leadership and Motivation in Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study is grounded in the importance of effective school leadership and teacher motivation in enhancing job satisfaction, particularly in senior high schools (SMA) in Banda Aceh. The purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of school principals' transformational leadership and teachers' work motivation on job satisfaction. A quantitative, ex post facto approach was employed in this study. The sample consisted of 60 teachers, proportionally selected from four public high schools accredited as A and B using the Slovin formula. Data were collected through closed-ended questionnaires and documentation and analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity tests, and linear regression with SPSS 26.0. The findings reveal that both transformational leadership and work motivation significantly affect teachers' job satisfaction. The regression analysis shows that transformational leadership (sig = 0.000) and work motivation (sig = 0.002) each significantly influence job satisfaction. Additionally, the F-test indicates that both variables simultaneously have a significant impact on job satisfaction (F = 81.8, sig = 0.000). These results imply that strengthening transformational leadership practices and enhancing teachers' motivation are crucial strategies for improving job satisfaction, which in turn can contribute to better educational outcomes in high schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the act of guiding and inspiring others to work towards common objectives (Ahyani et al., 2024; Aziz et al., 2024; Daulay et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025). It includes the ability to influence and motivate individuals to achieve shared goals, the ability to build relationships, communicate a vision, and create an environment that encourages collaboration and productivity (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022; Shittu et al., 2025; Yuliana et al., 2025). Leadership can occur in various contexts, including organizations, communities, and education, and involves different styles and approaches depending on the situation and the people being led (Albert et al., 2025; Chughtai et al., 2024; Greimel et al., 2023; Javid et al., 2024). Leadership can be defined as the ability of a leader to influence and direct subordinates toward achieving organizational goals effectively and efficiently (Amzat, 2022; Amzat et al., 2022).

A school principal who is effective in their role not only manages the school but also inspires and empowers teachers to contribute to their full potential. Transformational leadership can enhance teachers' job satisfaction by creating a positive and supportive work environment (Riatmaja et al., 2024; Subaşı et al., 2026, 2026). Transformational leadership, a leadership model widely discussed in the field of education, is believed to foster positive change through inspiration, motivation, and the development of individual potential within the organization (Efendi et al., 2023). This leadership style promotes openness between leaders and subordinates, enabling direct reception of feedback and suggestions by the leader (Trisnawati, 2024).

Motivation in schools is the drive that makes students actively engage in learning and achieve academic goals. This drive can be internal, such as an interest in learning, or external, such as rewards and praise (Daheri et al., 2022; Nursyam et al., 2025; Permadi et al., 2025). Teachers' work motivation is a crucial factor in improving their performance in carrying out their professional duties (Agus et al., 2024; Radhi et al., 2025; Urooj et al., 2024). When teachers feel motivated to achieve good results, it positively impacts their work approach and their sense of responsibility in teaching. Work motivation encourages teachers to continually refine their skills and seek innovative methods for delivering content, thereby enhancing their sense of satisfaction in their profession (Javid et al., 2024; Pratiwi & Warlizasusi, 2023).

Work satisfaction is one of the primary factors affecting teachers' performance and well-being at school. Job satisfaction refers to the sense of fulfillment derived from work, which includes receiving recognition for accomplishments, appropriate job placement, fair treatment, the provision of adequate resources, and a comfortable work environment (Pandita & Kiran, 2023; Sodiq et al., 2024). Teachers who feel satisfied with their work tend to be more motivated and committed, which in turn can enhance the quality of education provided to students (Hidayah et al., 2025; Hummel et al., 2024; Posangi et al., 2025). The success of a school's performance is influenced by various factors, one of which is teachers' work motivation. A teacher can work professionally if they have strong internal motivation (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023; S. Siregar et al., 2022; Z. A. B. Siregar et al., 2023).

Initial observations at public senior high schools in Banda Aceh indicate that the school principal's leadership has a significant influence on teachers' work dynamics. As such, principals are expected to demonstrate high dedication by providing clear

guidance and active support to the teaching staff. Additionally, creating an inclusive and collaborative work environment is essential, where open communication and mutual respect among teachers can be well-established.

Based on the explanations above, a question arises about how transformational leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction are interrelated. The main question is whether the transformational leadership of school principals and work motivation affect the job satisfaction of teachers in public senior high schools in Banda Aceh. This question will be answered through the data analyzed in this study. The aim of this research is to examine the impact of school principals' transformational leadership and work motivation on job satisfaction in public senior high schools in Banda Aceh.

METHODS

The approach used in this research is quantitative. Quantitative research is a systematic scientific method for analyzing phenomena and their relationships, with the goal of developing mathematical models, theories, or hypotheses regarding natural phenomena (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). In this study, measurement plays a crucial role in explaining the quantitative relationships in depth. Additionally, this research employs the ex post facto method, where the researcher investigates the causes of an event that has already occurred through retrospective analysis (Wicaksono, 2022).

This approach aims to gather the necessary data and information to support the research. The mathematical data obtained will be used to formulate hypotheses and answer the observed questions. Subsequently, conclusions will be drawn regarding the population with similar characteristics (Suriani & Jailani, 2023). The target population for this study consists of the teaching staff from accredited A and B senior high schools (SMA) in Banda Aceh. The researcher employed a probability sampling method to select a sample from four high schools and determined the sample size using the Slovin formula. A table of the sample size is presented below:

Table 1. *Sampel Size*

No	Nama Sekolah	Populasi	Sampel
1.	SMA Negeri 3 Banda Aceh	63	$\frac{63}{159} \times 61 = 24$
2.	SMA Negeri 4 Banda Aceh	55	$\frac{55}{159} \times 61 = 21$
3.	SMA Negeri 15 Banda Aceh	21	$\frac{21}{159} \times 61 = 8$
4.	SMA Negeri 16 Banda Aceh	20	$\frac{20}{159} \times 61 = 7$
	Jumlah	159	60

The results of the calculations show that the sample includes 60 respondents, proportionately chosen from each school. Data were gathered using closed-ended questionnaires and documentation. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to assess the attitudes and perceptions of the respondents. Prior to its implementation, the questionnaire was validated and tested for reliability using SPSS 26.0. Data analysis utilized descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. Furthermore, validity, normality, linearity tests, and multiple regression analysis were conducted to assess

the relationships among the variables. The findings from SPSS will inform the decision-making process for hypothesis testing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The results obtained from the research have to be supported by sufficient data. The research results and the discovery must be the answers, or the research hypothesis stated previously in the introduction part.

Based on the research data, the characteristics of the respondents are as follows:

Table 2. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	13	21,7	21,7	21,7
	Famale	47	78,3	78,3	100,0
	Total	60	100,0	100,0	

Based on the data analysis in the gender distribution table, out of 60 respondents consisting of both males and females, there are 13 male respondents (21.7%) and 47 female respondents (78.3%). Thus, the majority of respondents in this study are female, making up nearly 80% of the total sample. This indicates that female participation in this research is significantly higher than male participation. With a cumulative percentage of 100%, it shows that all data are valid, with no missing responses.

Table 3. Years of Service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-10 Years	24	40,0	40,0	40,0
	11-20 Years	21	35,0	35,0	75,0
	21-30 Years	8	13,3	13,3	88,3
	31-40 Years	7	11,7	11,7	100,0
	Total	60	100,0	100,0	

Based on the analysis of the distribution of respondents' years of service in this study, a total of 60 individuals with varying levels of experience were included. The largest group, comprising 40.0%, consists of respondents with 1-10 years of experience, indicating that many of them are relatively new to the workforce. Meanwhile, respondents with 11-20 years of experience also form a significant portion, accounting for 35.0%. Additionally, 11.0% of respondents have 21-30 years of experience, while a smaller group, comprising 11.7%, has 31-40 years of service. This data reflects the diversity of work experience among the respondents, with a cumulative percentage of 100% showcasing the various stages of careers that have been navigated. This diversity

in experience levels can influence the perspectives of the respondents regarding transformational leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction, providing a rich context for understanding their responses in the study.

Table 4. School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SMA Negeri 3	24	40,0	40,0	40,0
	SMA Negeri 4	21	35,0	35,0	75,0
	SMA Negeri 15	8	13,3	13,3	88,3
	SMA Negeri 16	7	11,7	11,7	100,0
	Total	60	100,0	100,0	

From four different schools. SMA Negeri 3 Banda Aceh contributed the largest proportion, accounting for 40.0%, followed by SMA Negeri 4 Banda Aceh with a contribution of 35.0%. SMA Negeri 15 Banda Aceh contributed 13.3%, while SMA Negeri 16 Banda Aceh accounted for 11.7%. This distribution indicates that the data collected is quite representative, with a cumulative total reaching 100%, reflecting an even spread across the schools. This suggests that the data is valid, with no missing information, and provides a diverse perspective from respondents across different educational institutions. Such representation allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the influences of transformational leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction within various school environments in Banda Aceh.

Normality Test

Tabel 5. Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		60
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	3,35400166
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,094
	Positive	,094
	Negative	-,062
Test Statistic		,094
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		,200 ^d

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Based on the results of the normality test displayed in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov One-Sample Test table, 60 data points were evaluated. The average of the unstandardized residuals is 0, and the standard deviation is 3.354. Since the significance value (0.200) is greater than 0.05, we can conclude that the residual data are normally distributed. This indicates that the assumptions required for conducting

further statistical analyses, such as regression analysis, have been met, allowing for reliable interpretation of the results.

Linearity Test

The criteria for assessing linearity indicate that two variables are deemed to have a linear relationship if the deviation from linearity exceeds 0.05. Below are the results of the linearity test:

Tabel 6. Linearity Test

N		60
Y.X1	Deviation from Linearity	196,674
Y.X2	Deviation from Linearity	721,100

Since both deviation from linearity values (196.674 and 721.100) are much greater than 0.05, we can conclude that there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable (Y) and the independent variables (X1 and X2). This indicates that the data supports a consistent linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in this study. Such findings validate the appropriateness of using linear regression analysis to further explore the relationships between transformational leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction.

T Test

The hypothesis testing was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis. The aim is to assess the simultaneous effects of two independent variables: Participative Leadership (X1) and Organizational Communication (X2), on the dependent variable, Teacher Performance (Y). The findings of this analysis are shown in the table below:

Tabel 7. T Tes

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
			Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17,021	3,755		4,533	,000
	Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah	,557	,092	,599	6,082	,000
	Motivasi Kerja	,198	,061	,320	3,251	,002

a. Dependent Variable: Kepuasan Kerja

Based on the table, the significance value (sig) for the impact of X1 (Transformational Leadership of the Principal) on Y (Job Satisfaction) is 0.000, which is below 0.05, and the calculated t-value is 6.082, exceeding 2.000. This suggests that the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, indicating a significant effect of the principal's

transformational leadership on job satisfaction. In the same way, the p-value for the impact of X2 (Work Motivation) on Y is 0.002, which is also below 0.05, and the computed t-value is 3.251, exceeding 2.000. This results in the rejection of H0, suggesting that work motivation significantly affects job satisfaction.

F Test

The F-test was conducted to determine whether there is a simultaneous (combined) effect of the independent variables (X) on the dependent variable (Y). The results of this test can be seen in the table below:

Tabel 8. F Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1906,473	2	953,237	81,865	,000 ^b
	Residual	663,710	57	11,644		
	Total	2570,183	59			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work Motivation, Transformational Leadership of School Principals.

Based on the table, the significance value (sig) for the combined effect of X1 (Transformational Leadership) and X2 (Work Motivation) on Y (Job Satisfaction) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Furthermore, the calculated F-value is 81.8, exceeding the critical F-value of 4.00. These findings indicate that the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted, suggesting that there is a significant combined effect of the principal's transformational leadership and work motivation on job satisfaction.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, the analysis shows that the normality test indicates the residual data is normally distributed, which is an important prerequisite for regression analysis. This provides confidence that the analytical results are reliable and valid. Moreover, the linearity test reveals a notable relationship between job satisfaction, which serves as the dependent variable, and the two independent variables: the Principal's Transformational Leadership and work motivation. These results suggest that alterations in either of these variables can have a direct impact on job satisfaction (Adeoye et al., 2025; Bass, 1999; Subaşı et al., 2026).

In examining the effects of the Principal's Transformational Leadership, the research findings reveal a significance value of 0.002, which is below 0.05. This suggests that the Principal's Transformational Leadership has a significant impact on Job Satisfaction. Research by Suwoko, H. (2020) indicates that principals' transformational leadership significantly influences teachers' job satisfaction. Principals utilizing this leadership approach can inspire and motivate their staff, foster a positive workplace atmosphere, and promote involvement in decision-making processes. Transformational leadership can strengthen teachers' sense of belonging and commitment to the institution by offering support and professional development opportunities (Agazu et al., 2025; Asmendri et al., 2024). Research indicates that principals who engage in transformational leadership can significantly boost job

satisfaction, which in turn positively impacts performance and the overall quality of education in schools. (Yosikas, A.B., 2023).

Work motivation plays a very important role, as the research results show a significance value of 0.000. This means that work motivation is crucial in the effectiveness of the principal's transformational leadership. When teachers are motivated, they tend to be more open to the changes and innovations implemented by the principal. According to the research by Kwartarani, Y. (2022) high motivation can enhance teachers' active participation in the learning process and curriculum development within the context of transformational leadership. Work motivation becomes a key factor that encourages principals to implement inspiring and supportive leadership strategies, ultimately creating a better learning environment and improving the quality of education (Harms & Garrett-Ruffin, 2023; Hilal et al., 2025; Ningsih et al., 2025). Thus, the reciprocal relationship between work motivation and transformational leadership is vital for the success of a school.

This analysis emphasizes that transformational leadership can serve as a role model for teachers, inspiring them to achieve higher standards and encouraging critical and creative thinking in the learning process (Mukaddamah, 2024). The results of the F-test show a significant simultaneous impact of both independent variables on job satisfaction, with a significance level of 0.000. Job satisfaction can enhance work motivation, making it more effective and cohesive (Yuan & Alias, 2021). Teachers' job satisfaction can impact their own lives and those of others, particularly their students, due to the strong correlation between job satisfaction and achievement (Djuraidi, 2020). Transformational leadership has a notable and beneficial effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, it is crucial for school principals to not only develop transformational leadership skills but also to enhance work motivation within job satisfaction. A leader, such as a principal, will be recognized as a leader when they can influence and guide their members toward achieving the school's goals (Yunus et al., 2021). Motivation is essential in the education system; motivated teachers experience job satisfaction. Effective leadership from school principals can increase teachers' work motivation and their satisfaction in teaching, fostering a love for their profession (Shahnaz et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal several important outcomes regarding the relationship among transformational leadership, work motivation, and teachers' job satisfaction in public senior high schools in Banda Aceh. The study found that transformational leadership had a stronger influence on job satisfaction than on work motivation, as indicated by the higher regression coefficient and t-value. This result suggests that teachers' perceptions of supportive, inspirational, and participative leadership from school principals play a central role in shaping their professional satisfaction. Another significant finding is that although most respondents were relatively early in their careers (1–10 years of service), job satisfaction remained strongly associated with leadership quality and motivational factors, indicating that these variables are highly relevant regardless of teaching experience. The simultaneous influence of transformational leadership and work motivation underscores the importance of integrating

effective leadership practices with motivational support to foster a productive educational environment.

This study contributes to scientific knowledge by strengthening prior research on the importance of transformational leadership in educational institutions, while also providing empirical evidence from the context of Indonesian public senior high schools. The findings confirm that transformational leadership and work motivation significantly affect teachers' job satisfaction, supporting earlier studies conducted in educational management and organizational behavior. In addition, this study makes a contextual contribution by demonstrating how leadership and motivation interact within the specific school environment in Banda Aceh. The study also reinforces the relevance of quantitative ex post facto approaches in examining organizational and educational behavior through regression analysis. Therefore, the research expands the existing literature by providing updated empirical insights into how leadership and motivational factors jointly shape teachers' professional well-being in secondary education institutions.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research involved only 60 respondents from four public senior high schools in Banda Aceh, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts. Second, the study focused only on transformational leadership and work motivation. At the same time, other factors that may influence job satisfaction, such as organizational culture, compensation, workload, or teacher professionalism, were not examined. Third, the use of a quantitative approach and questionnaire-based data collection may not fully capture deeper psychological and contextual aspects of teachers' experiences. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger, more diverse samples from different educational levels and regions, to apply mixed-methods or qualitative approaches, and to include additional variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction and educational performance.

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