



Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Citra Bakti

p-ISSN 2355-5106 || e-ISSN 2620-6641

<https://jurnal.citrabakti.ac.id/index.php/jil>



THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE THROUGH WORK MOTIVATION AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

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Article History

Received:
December 11, 2025

Accepted:
February 2, 2026

Published:
February 18, 2026

Abstract

Teacher performance constitutes a primary determinant of educational quality; however, variations across schools indicate the need to identify the most influential organizational and instructional factors. This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and learning effectiveness on teacher performance, with work motivation serving as a mediating variable, at public senior high schools under Branch Office XI in Garut Regency. A quantitative approach with a correlational–explanatory design was employed. The sample consisted of 93 teachers selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that learning effectiveness has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.726$; $p < 0.001$) and work motivation ($\beta = 0.689$; $p < 0.001$). Work motivation significantly affects teacher performance ($\beta = 0.195$; $p = 0.010$) and partially mediates the relationship between learning effectiveness and teacher performance. In contrast, transformational leadership does not exert a significant effect on either work motivation or teacher performance within the sampled context. The model demonstrates strong predictive power for teacher performance ($R^2 = 0.834$). These results suggest that strengthening effective instructional practices and motivation-enhancement strategies plays a more decisive role than leadership style alone in improving teacher performance. The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and focus on a single regional context; therefore, generalization should be undertaken with caution.

Keywords: learning effectiveness; teacher performance; transformational leadership; work motivation; SEM-PLS

Abstrak. Kinerja guru merupakan penentu utama kualitas pendidikan; namun, adanya variasi antar sekolah menunjukkan perlunya mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor organisasional dan pembelajaran yang paling berpengaruh. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional dan efektivitas pembelajaran terhadap kinerja guru, dengan motivasi kerja sebagai variabel mediasi, pada Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri di bawah Cabang Dinas Pendidikan Wilayah XI di Kabupaten Garut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional–eksplanatori. Sampel terdiri atas 93 guru yang dipilih melalui teknik proportionate stratified random sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur dan dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas pembelajaran berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja guru ($\beta = 0,726$; $p < 0,001$) serta terhadap motivasi kerja ($\beta = 0,689$; $p < 0,001$). Motivasi kerja berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja guru ($\beta = 0,195$; $p = 0,010$) dan memediasi secara parsial hubungan antara efektivitas pembelajaran dan kinerja guru. Sebaliknya, kepemimpinan transformasional tidak menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap motivasi kerja maupun kinerja guru dalam konteks sampel penelitian ini. Model memiliki daya prediksi yang kuat terhadap kinerja guru ($R^2 = 0,834$). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa penguatan praktik pembelajaran yang efektif serta strategi peningkatan motivasi lebih menentukan dibandingkan gaya kepemimpinan semata dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru. Penelitian ini terbatas pada desain potong lintang, ketergantungan pada data laporan diri (self-reported), dan fokus pada satu konteks wilayah tertentu; oleh karena itu, generalisasi temuan perlu dilakukan secara hati-hati.

Kata kunci: efektivitas pembelajaran; kinerja guru; kepemimpinan transformasional; motivasi kerja; SEM-PLS

Background

Teacher performance represents a central determinant of the quality of educational processes and outcomes, particularly at the secondary education level. Teachers function not merely as transmitters of knowledge, but also as instructional designers, facilitators of learning interaction, evaluators of competency attainment, and agents of value and character formation. In contemporary educational systems, expectations regarding teacher professionalism have intensified alongside curriculum reforms emphasizing student-centered learning, twenty-first century competencies, technology integration, and differentiated instruction (Rahayu & Putra, 2024). Consequently, improving teacher performance has become a strategic priority within sustainable education reform initiatives.

Despite numerous quality enhancement policies, teacher performance continues to display significant variation across schools and regions. Such disparities are reflected in differences in instructional effectiveness, levels of student engagement, pedagogical innovation, and learning outcomes. This phenomenon suggests that teacher performance is not solely determined by individual competence, but is also shaped by organizational and instructional factors that structure the teacher's work environment (Santosa, 2022). Therefore, empirical investigation is required to identify the primary determinants of teacher performance through a more integrative analytical framework.

One prominent organizational factor widely examined in educational management literature is principal leadership, particularly transformational leadership. Transformational leadership emphasizes a leader's capacity to articulate a shared vision, inspire subordinates,

stimulate innovation, and attend to individual needs (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Bass, 2023). Theoretically, transformational leadership enhances work motivation by fulfilling basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as articulated in Self-Determination Theory. Increased work motivation is subsequently expected to contribute to improved teacher performance. However, empirical findings remain inconsistent. In certain contexts, transformational leadership significantly influences teacher performance, whereas in others its effect weakens or becomes insignificant due to variations in organizational characteristics, levels of teacher professional autonomy, and bureaucratic school culture (Hamdani & Yusuf, 2021).

Beyond leadership, teacher work motivation constitutes a critical psychological factor that directly influences the intensity, direction, and persistence of work behavior. Work motivation reflects intrinsic and extrinsic drivers that shape teachers' commitment to planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction (Gagné et al., 2021). Teachers with higher motivation tend to demonstrate stronger professional commitment, greater adaptability to curriculum reforms, and increased openness to instructional innovation. Nevertheless, work motivation does not operate independently. It can be strengthened or weakened by experiences of instructional success, organizational support, and the perceived effectiveness of classroom practices (Wibowo & Handayani, 2023).

Learning effectiveness represents an instructional factor closely aligned with the core professional practices of teachers. Effective learning is characterized by systematic planning, relevant pedagogical strategies, conducive classroom management, active student engagement, and continuous assessment (Nuraini & Puspitasari, 2021). From a theoretical perspective, learning effectiveness not only enhances student outcomes but also reinforces teachers' perceived competence, which in turn strengthens work motivation and professional performance. Thus, learning effectiveness may be positioned not merely as an outcome of teacher performance, but as a key determinant shaping performance itself.

Public senior high schools under Branch Office XI of the Garut Regency Education Authority exhibit diverse characteristics in terms of geographic conditions, resource availability, student backgrounds, and managerial quality. Teachers in this region are required to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, apply differentiated instruction, and adapt teaching strategies to heterogeneous local contexts (Suryaman & Hikmah, 2023). These demands underscore the need to identify which factors most substantially contribute to enhancing teacher performance within this specific public secondary education setting.

Previous studies have frequently examined the relationships among leadership, work motivation, and teacher performance in a partial manner. Many have positioned transformational leadership as the principal determinant without comprehensively testing the

role of learning effectiveness as the instructional factor most proximal to teachers' professional practice. Furthermore, limited research has integrated transformational leadership, learning effectiveness, and work motivation within a single structural model employing a mediation approach. This gap is particularly evident in studies conducted at the regional public secondary school level (Nuraini & Puspitasari, 2021).

Addressing this research gap, the present study proposes an integrative model that simultaneously examines the influence of transformational leadership and learning effectiveness on teacher performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable, using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The novelty of this study lies in: (1) positioning learning effectiveness as a primary determinant of teacher performance; (2) testing the mediating role of work motivation in linking organizational and instructional factors to performance; and (3) empirically examining the model within the context of public senior high schools in Branch Office XI, Garut Regency.

The urgency of this research stems from the need for empirical, data-driven evidence to inform teacher professional development policies and targeted school management strategies. Without a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of teacher performance, quality improvement interventions risk being ineffective and unsustainable (Hair et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is essential for identifying the dominant factors that substantively contribute to teacher performance enhancement.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and learning effectiveness on teacher performance, with work motivation serving as a mediating variable, in public senior high schools within Branch Office XI of Garut Regency. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational management literature and practically to the strengthening of instructional effectiveness and sustainable work motivation management.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational–explanatory design. The quantitative approach was selected to empirically examine causal relationships among variables through statistical analysis of numerical data (Sugiyono, 2021). The correlational design aimed to identify the relationships among transformational leadership, learning effectiveness, work motivation, and teacher performance. The explanatory component was used to test both direct and indirect (mediating) effects within an integrated structural model (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The research model included two exogenous variables—transformational leadership (X_1) and learning effectiveness (X_2)—one mediating variable—work motivation (Z)—and one

endogenous variable—teacher performance (Y). All constructs were treated as reflective constructs in accordance with the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach.

The population comprised all public senior high school teachers under the coordination of Branch Office XI of the West Java Provincial Education Authority (Garut Regency), totaling 1,326 teachers across 32 schools.

The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in 93 respondents (Sugiyono, 2021). Sample adequacy was further evaluated using the 10-times rule in PLS-SEM, which requires a minimum sample size equal to ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at an endogenous construct. Since teacher performance received three direct paths, the minimum required sample was 30 respondents. Therefore, the final sample of 93 respondents exceeded the minimum requirement and was deemed adequate for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2023).

A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was applied because the population was heterogeneous across schools in terms of teacher numbers and institutional characteristics (Sutama, 2021). This technique ensured proportional representation from each school. The study was conducted between July and August 2025.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Transformational leadership (X_1) was adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio & Bass, 2023) and comprised 35 items representing four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Work motivation (Z) was developed based on Self-Determination Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Gagné et al., 2021), capturing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through 16 items. Learning effectiveness (X_2) assessed instructional practices through indicators of systematic planning, innovative teaching strategies, classroom management, formative assessment, and student engagement, and was measured using 20 items (Rahayu & Putra, 2024). Teacher performance (Y) was measured using 30 items derived from national teacher performance standards (Santosa, 2022), encompassing instructional planning, instructional implementation, learning evaluation, professional development, and contributions to school development.

Validity and reliability testing was performed using SmartPLS 3.0 through an outer model evaluation. The assessment applied standard criteria, including factor loadings of at least 0.70, an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of at least 0.50, Composite Reliability (CR) of at least 0.70, Cronbach's Alpha of at least 0.70, and a Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) below 0.90. The results indicated that all constructs satisfied the requirements for both

convergent and discriminant validity, as indicator loadings exceeded 0.70, AVE values were above 0.50, and both CR and Cronbach's Alpha were greater than 0.70; therefore, the measurement model was deemed valid and reliable (Hair et al., 2023). In addition, because all variables were obtained from self-reported responses collected at a single point in time, several procedural remedies were implemented to reduce common method bias, including guaranteeing respondent anonymity, randomizing the order of questionnaire items, and varying item structure. This was further supported by the full collinearity test, which showed that all VIF values were below 3.3, indicating no evidence of common method bias.

Data collection followed several stages. First, research permission was obtained from Branch Office XI of the West Java Provincial Education Authority and the principals of participating schools. Second, the study was introduced to respondents to explain its objectives, questionnaire procedures, and confidentiality assurances. Third, questionnaires were distributed to selected teachers either directly or through online platforms. Finally, completed questionnaires were collected and screened for completeness prior to statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which was chosen because it does not require strict assumptions of data normality, remains appropriate for relatively small sample sizes, and prioritizes predictive model evaluation (Hair et al., 2023). The analysis proceeded through several stages: first, descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize respondent characteristics and compute composite scores for each construct. Next, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated by examining convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Afterward, the structural model (inner model) was assessed by estimating path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and statistical significance through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Finally, mediation effects were tested by bootstrapping indirect effects, and mediation was interpreted as partial when both the direct and indirect paths were statistically significant.

Results and Discussion

Results

This study involved 93 public senior high school teachers from 32 schools under the coordination of Branch Office XI, Garut Regency. The use of proportionate stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation from each school.

In terms of age, most respondents were between 31–40 years (38 teachers; 40.86%), followed by 41–50 years (23 teachers; 24.73%), under 30 years (22 teachers; 23.66%), and

above 50 years (10 teachers; 10.75%). This distribution indicates that the majority of participants were within a productive and professionally mature age group.

Regarding gender, 54 respondents (58.06%) were female and 39 (41.94%) were male, reflecting a relatively balanced distribution with moderate female predominance. Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the distribution of composite latent variable scores generated from the PLS estimation. No missing values were identified. The reported values represent composite latent variable scores (PLS estimates), not raw cumulative item totals; therefore, the range of values is smaller than the total number of questionnaire items.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Transformational Leadership	30.48	31	15	35	4.21
Work Motivation	9.02	9	7	10	0.95
Learning Effectiveness	22.13	22	18	25	2.22
Teacher Performance	13.93	13	8	20	1.62

All constructs show relatively high mean values and low to moderate dispersion, indicating generally positive perceptions among respondents regarding leadership practices, instructional effectiveness, motivation, and performance.

The measurement model was evaluated using convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability criteria through SmartPLS analysis.

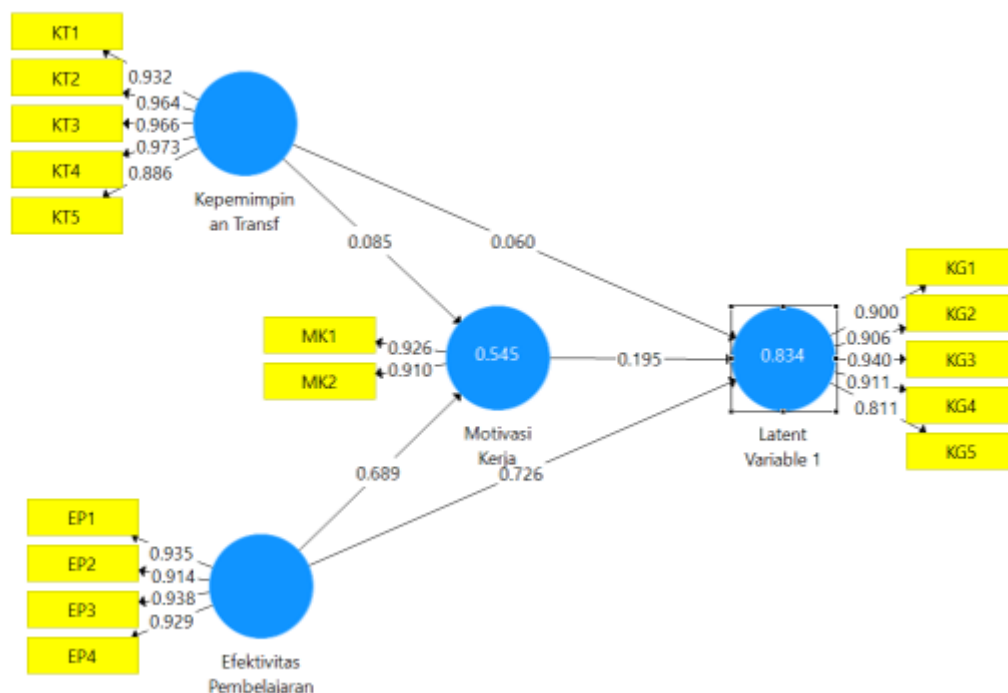


Figure 1. Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025.

All indicators demonstrated loading factors above the threshold of 0.70. The loading ranges were:

- Transformational Leadership: 0.886–0.973
- Work Motivation: 0.910–0.926
- Learning Effectiveness: 0.914–0.938
- Teacher Performance: 0.811–0.940

Additionally:

- AVE values exceeded 0.50
- Composite Reliability exceeded 0.70
- Cronbach's Alpha exceeded 0.70
- HTMT values were below 0.90

These results confirm that the measurement model satisfies convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability standards.

The structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs.

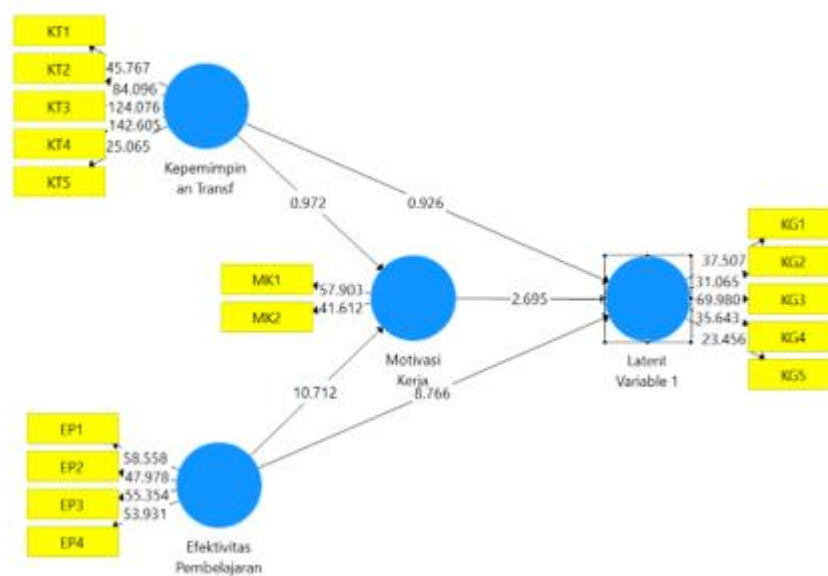


Figure 2. Structural Model (Inner Model)

Source: *SmartPLS Output, 2025.*

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

- Teacher Performance: $R^2 = 0.834$
- Work Motivation: $R^2 = 0.545$

The R^2 value of 0.834 indicates that 83.4% of the variance in teacher performance is explained by transformational leadership, learning effectiveness, and work motivation. According to established guidelines, this represents a substantial level of explanatory power.

The R^2 value of 0.545 for work motivation indicates moderate explanatory strength.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2). Since all Q^2 values are greater than zero, the model demonstrates strong predictive relevance.

a) Q^2 Teacher Performance = 0.657

b) Q^2 Work Motivation = 0.444

Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples at a 5% significance level.

Table 2. Direct Effects

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
Learning Effectiveness → Teacher Performance	0.726	8.694	0.000	Significant
Learning Effectiveness → Work Motivation	0.689	10.597	0.000	Significant
Work Motivation → Teacher Performance	0.195	2.581	0.010	Significant
Transformational Leadership → Teacher Performance	0.060	0.980	0.328	Not Significant
Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation	0.085	0.882	0.378	Not Significant

The indirect effect of learning effectiveness on teacher performance through work motivation was statistically significant: Indirect effect (β) = 0.134, p-value = 0.010. This indicates partial mediation, as both direct and indirect effects were significant.

In contrast, work motivation did not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance because neither the direct nor indirect paths were significant.

Discussion

The findings highlight learning effectiveness as the dominant predictor of teacher performance. The strong direct coefficient ($\beta = 0.726$) indicates that systematic instructional planning, innovative pedagogy, classroom management, formative assessment, and student engagement are central to professional performance outcomes. Learning effectiveness also strongly influences work motivation ($\beta = 0.689$), suggesting that successful teaching experiences reinforce teachers' perceived competence and intrinsic motivation. This aligns with motivational theory, particularly the competence component of Self-Determination Theory. Although the direct effect of work motivation on teacher performance is smaller ($\beta = 0.195$), it remains statistically significant. Motivation functions as a psychological mechanism that strengthens the translation of effective instructional practice into measurable performance outcomes.

Interestingly, transformational leadership did not significantly influence either motivation or performance in this context. This suggests that within the studied public secondary school system, instructional practices exert a more immediate and tangible impact on teacher performance than leadership style. It is possible that standardized administrative structures or established professional autonomy reduce the relative influence of leadership behavior.

The structural model demonstrates substantial explanatory strength ($R^2 = 0.834$), indicating that the integration of instructional and motivational variables provides a robust framework for explaining teacher performance.

The findings demonstrate that learning effectiveness is the most dominant determinant of teacher performance in public senior high schools under Branch Office XI, Garut Regency. The substantial path coefficient ($\beta = 0.726$) confirms that the quality of instructional practices—including systematic lesson planning, innovative pedagogical strategies, classroom management, and formative assessment—directly enhances teachers' professional performance.

These results reinforce the argument that the core of teacher performance lies in classroom instructional practice. Teacher performance is not primarily shaped by administrative structures or formal leadership influence, but by the teacher's capacity to manage and deliver effective learning processes. Within the secondary education context, learning effectiveness therefore functions as a substantive determinant of performance rather than merely an outcome of it.

Work motivation also shows a significant direct effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.195$) and partially mediates the relationship between learning effectiveness and performance (indirect effect = 0.134; $p = 0.010$). This indicates that effective instructional practices not only improve performance directly but also enhance teachers' internal motivation, which further strengthens professional outcomes.

In contrast, transformational leadership does not significantly affect either work motivation or teacher performance. This finding suggests that in this specific institutional context, instructional factors exert a stronger and more immediate influence on performance than formal leadership style.

The results can be interpreted through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Gagné et al., 2021). Teachers who successfully implement effective instructional strategies are likely to experience enhanced perceived competence. This strengthened sense of competence reinforces intrinsic motivation, which subsequently contributes to improved professional performance.

In this perspective, learning effectiveness is not merely a product of performance but also a psychological input that strengthens teachers' self-confidence and professional commitment. Successful classroom management and instructional mastery generate mastery experiences that foster motivational persistence and consistency in work behavior.

The findings are also aligned with performance theory, which posits that individual performance is shaped by the interaction between ability and motivation. Learning effectiveness represents the actualization of pedagogical competence, while work motivation represents the psychological energy that drives professional behavior. The combination of both factors produces optimal performance outcomes.

The non-significant effect of transformational leadership on both work motivation and teacher performance requires contextual interpretation. First, public senior high school teachers generally operate within a relatively standardized professional framework. National competency standards, performance evaluation systems, and regulatory guidelines provide structured expectations. In such a system, variations in leadership style may not generate sufficiently strong differences in individual performance outcomes. Second, bureaucratic characteristics of public schools may limit the flexibility of principals in applying transformational practices. Administrative regulations and institutional constraints could reduce the practical influence of leadership behaviors on daily instructional performance. Third, the findings suggest that instructional leadership—leadership directly focused on supervising and improving teaching practices—may be more relevant than transformational leadership in influencing teacher performance. Leadership that directly engages with pedagogical processes might exert a stronger impact than visionary or inspirational leadership styles.

Thus, the results do not negate the importance of leadership; rather, they indicate that its influence is context-dependent and possibly mediated by other organizational factors not included in the present model.

Work motivation functions as a partial mediator between learning effectiveness and teacher performance. Partial mediation indicates that learning effectiveness maintains a strong direct effect, while part of its influence operates through motivational enhancement.

The psychological mechanism underlying this relationship can be explained as follows:

1. Effective instructional management enhances teachers' self-efficacy.
2. Increased self-efficacy strengthens intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.
3. Higher motivation promotes consistency, discipline, and instructional innovation.
4. These behavioral outcomes collectively enhance overall teacher performance.

Work motivation therefore acts as a psychological amplifier that reinforces the impact of instructional effectiveness on professional outcomes.

The R^2 value of 0.834 indicates substantial explanatory power for teacher performance. This suggests that the combination of learning effectiveness and work motivation provides a robust explanation of performance variation within this context.

However, the strength of the model should be interpreted cautiously. Since all variables were measured through self-reported instruments at a single time point, there is potential for inflated correlations among constructs. Although collinearity testing did not indicate serious common method bias, future research employing longitudinal designs or multi-source data (e.g., principal evaluations or classroom observations) would strengthen causal inference.

The findings offer several strategic implications for secondary education management: (1) Teacher performance improvement programs should prioritize strengthening instructional practices through innovative pedagogical training, lesson study initiatives, and classroom-based academic supervision. (2) Professional development strategies should be integrated with motivation-enhancement mechanisms, including constructive feedback, professional recognition, and continuous competency development opportunities. (3) School leadership evaluation frameworks should incorporate instructional-focused leadership approaches rather than emphasizing transformational characteristics alone.

This study contributes to educational management literature by demonstrating that, within certain institutional contexts, learning effectiveness exerts a stronger influence on teacher performance than transformational leadership. The findings reposition instructional practice at the center of performance analysis in secondary education.

Additionally, the study reinforces the role of work motivation as a psychological mediator linking instructional effectiveness to professional performance outcomes.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of transformational leadership and learning effectiveness on teacher performance, with work motivation as a mediating variable, in public senior high schools under Branch Office XI, Garut Regency. The findings reveal that learning effectiveness is the most dominant determinant of teacher performance. Work motivation significantly influences performance and partially mediates the relationship between learning effectiveness and performance. In contrast, transformational leadership does not significantly affect either work motivation or teacher performance within the studied context. The structural model demonstrates substantial explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.834$), emphasizing the importance of instructional factors over formal leadership style in public secondary schools.

Practically, efforts to enhance teacher performance should prioritize strengthening classroom instructional practices through innovative pedagogical training, lesson study, formative assessment development, and instructional supervision. Motivation-enhancement

strategies should be integrated through professional feedback systems, recognition mechanisms, and sustained competency development. These findings suggest that teacher professional development policies should focus primarily on instructional quality as the core driver of performance improvement.

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-report measures, and focus on a single regional education branch. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal designs, incorporate multi-informant data sources (such as principal evaluations or classroom observations), and expand the geographical scope to enhance generalizability. Additionally, subsequent studies may examine instructional leadership or school culture as alternative determinants of teacher performance.

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