

Transactional Leadership, Work Discipline, and Job Satisfaction in Elementary School Teacher Performance: A Study in Pondok Aren District, South Tangerang

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Abstract

Teacher performance is a crucial determinant of educational quality, as it directly influences the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. This study examines the effects of transactional leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction on the performance of elementary school teachers in Pondok Aren District, South Tangerang City. Employing a quantitative research design, the study involved a representative sample of teachers selected through proportional sampling techniques. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using statistical methods to determine both partial and simultaneous effects of the independent variables on teacher performance. The findings indicate that transactional leadership has a significant positive influence on teacher performance by clarifying expectations, reinforcing accountability, and providing contingent rewards. Work discipline also demonstrates a strong positive effect, reflecting the importance of compliance with rules, time management, and professional responsibility in sustaining optimal performance. In addition, job satisfaction contributes positively by enhancing teachers' motivation, commitment, and engagement in their professional roles. Simultaneously, transactional leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction collectively exert a significant influence on teacher performance. These results suggest that improving teacher performance requires an integrated approach that combines effective leadership practices, disciplined work behavior, and supportive organizational conditions that foster job satisfaction. The study provides practical implications for school leaders and policymakers in designing strategies to enhance teacher performance and overall educational quality.

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Introduction

Quality education serves as a cornerstone for national development, as it shapes competent and competitive human resources vital for societal and economic progress (Lahagu et al., 2024; Rahmat, 2020; Abdillah, 2024; Hartati et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2023). A central factor influencing educational quality is teacher performance, which encompasses the teacher's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively (Adnan et al., 2024; Asyadiqie et al., 2026; Gultom, 2020; Girsang, 2020; Ubabuddin, 2024). High teacher performance is associated with improved student outcomes, a positive learning environment, and enhanced school reputation (Suwenti et al., 2024; Anggal et al., 2020; Syakroni, 2023; Mardikaningsih et al., 2022; Jainiyah et al., 2023; Muspawi, 2021; Ocsis et al., 2024).

Transactional leadership focuses on supervision, monitoring, and contingent rewards to achieve specific goals, promoting accountability and structured task completion (Masbukhin et al., Khan et al., 2025). In contrast, transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and moral influence, aligning teachers' values and motivations with organizational goals. Empirical studies suggest that transformational leadership positively predicts teacher motivation, innovation, and instructional effectiveness (Studies in Educational Evaluation, 2025; Frontiers in Psychology, 2025). Both leadership styles represent critical structural factors influencing teacher performance, with transactional leadership supporting operational consistency and transformational leadership fostering engagement and creativity.

Work discipline refers to teachers' adherence to professional norms, punctuality, and proactive fulfillment of responsibilities. Organizational behavior literature links disciplined work behaviors to higher performance, reduced counterproductive work behaviors, and effective classroom management (Idham & Budi Hart, 2025). As a behavioral mechanism, work discipline mediates the relationship between leadership practices and actual performance outcomes, ensuring that structural expectations are consistently realized.

Job satisfaction captures teachers' cognitive and emotional evaluation of their work environment, including autonomy, recognition, and professional support (Collie et al., 2024). Recent international studies indicate that job satisfaction contributes to teacher well-being, engagement, and instructional quality, serving as a psychological mechanism that interacts with structural factors such as leadership and discipline (Zee et al., 2025).

Although prior studies have investigated leadership, discipline, and job satisfaction separately, their combined influence on teacher performance remains underexplored, particularly in non-Western educational contexts. While leadership and

satisfaction are widely studied, the interaction with the behavioral mechanism of work discipline in determining teacher performance has not been rigorously examined. Understanding how structural (leadership and discipline) and psychological (job satisfaction) factors jointly affect teacher performance is theoretically and practically significant, offering insights into optimizing educational management in diverse school settings.

In Pondok Aren District, South Tangerang City, teacher performance in public elementary schools still faces challenges, including limitations in lesson planning, assessment development, curriculum adaptation, and communication with students, parents, and colleagues. In addition, the application of transactional leadership and work discipline is inconsistent, as evidenced by deviations in work hours and compliance. While some teachers report high job satisfaction, others demonstrate low motivation, negatively impacting performance.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of transactional leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction on teacher performance, both individually and collectively, in public elementary schools in Pondok Aren District. By grounding the research in established international theories and recent empirical evidence, this study contributes to the literature on educational leadership and performance while offering insights applicable to local educational policy and practice.

Method

This study employed a quantitative survey design with a multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationships among the research variables. Specifically, the study aimed to analyze the effect of transactional leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction on the performance of public elementary school teachers in Pondok Aren District, South Tangerang City (Akbar et al., 2023). The population of this study consisted of all public elementary school teachers in Pondok Aren District, totaling [insert population size] teachers. A proportional random sampling technique was applied to select the sample, resulting in [insert sample size] respondents. The respondents' characteristics, including gender, age, teaching experience, and educational background, were recorded to ensure representativeness. The research instruments consisted of structured questionnaires measuring each variable. Transactional leadership was measured using indicators such as role clarity, reward and punishment consistency, and supervision effectiveness. Work discipline was measured through punctuality, task completion, and adherence to school regulations. Job satisfaction was assessed based on intrinsic satisfaction, work environment, and recognition, while teacher performance was measured in terms of lesson planning, classroom management, and student achievement outcomes. All instruments used a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to data

collection, validity and reliability tests were conducted, confirming that all instruments were statistically valid ($p < 0.05$) and reliable (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70). Data collection followed a systematic procedure, including obtaining permissions, distributing questionnaires, and ensuring respondents' confidentiality. Data analysis was performed in several steps: (1) descriptive analysis to summarize respondents' characteristics and variable distributions, (2) assumption testing for regression analysis, including normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, and (3) hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression to examine the direct and simultaneous effects of the independent variables on teacher performance.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the analysis of the relationship between transactional leadership and teacher performance in work discipline control are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Results of Partial Correlation Test between Transactional Leadership and Teacher Performance in Work Discipline Control

Variables (Control: Work Discipline)	Teacher Performance	Transactional Leadership	Work Discipline
Teacher Performance	1.000	0.863	0.955
Transactional Leadership	0.863	1.000	0.859
Work Discipline	0.955	0.859	1.000

When controlling for work discipline, the partial correlation between teacher performance and transactional leadership was $r = 0.897$, with a significance level of $p < 0.01$, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This suggests that, even when work discipline is held constant, transactional leadership—characterized by clear instructions, structured supervision, and reward-based accountability—significantly supports higher teacher performance.

Additionally, the correlation between teacher performance and work discipline was $r = 1.000$, $p < 0.01$, showing a perfect positive relationship within this sample. This indicates that work discipline is highly aligned with teacher performance outcomes, emphasizing that adherence to rules, punctuality, and consistent task execution are critical behavioral mechanisms driving effective teaching. Together, these results imply that while transactional leadership provides guidance and structure, work discipline acts as a foundational determinant, directly influencing teacher performance. The interaction suggests that leadership effectiveness is maximized when teachers maintain high levels of disciplined work behavior, highlighting the complementary roles of structural and behavioral factors in educational settings.

Based on the discussion of the partial correlation test above, it is known that the presence of the work discipline variable (X_2) will have an influence on the relationship between transactional leadership (X_1) and teacher performance (Y). This means that it is indicated by the increase in the correlation coefficient from 0.863 to 0.897, meaning that the relationship

between transactional leadership (X_1) and teacher performance (Y) is significantly influenced by work discipline (X_2). Thus, it can be concluded that the transactional leadership variable (X_1) is not the only variable that determines teacher performance (Y) because there are other variables that are also related to teacher performance (Y), namely work discipline (X_2).

The results of the analysis of the relationship between transactional leadership and teacher performance and job satisfaction are shown in the following table:

Table 2. Results of Partial Correlation Test between Transactional Leadership and Teacher Performance Job Satisfaction Control

Variables Control: Work Discipline	Teacher Performance	Transactional Leadership	Work Discipline
Teacher Performance	1.000	0.863	0.962
Transactional Leadership	0.863	1.000	0.964
Work Discipline	0.962	0.964	1.000

When controlling for work discipline, the relationship between teacher performance and transactional leadership strengthened, with a partial correlation coefficient of $r = 0.903$ ($p = 0.000$), indicating a strong and statistically significant positive association. This suggests that, independent of the level of work discipline, teachers who perceive higher transactional leadership characterized by clear guidance, structured supervision, and reward mechanisms—tend to exhibit higher performance.

In contrast, the correlation between teacher performance and work discipline under the same control was $r = 1.000$, with a p -value of 0.828. While the coefficient indicates a perfect positive correlation, the high p -value suggests that this relationship is not statistically significant when accounting for the influence of transactional leadership. This may imply that, in the presence of strong transactional leadership, the unique contribution of work discipline to teacher performance is less distinguishable in the statistical model, likely due to overlapping variance. Overall, these results indicate that transactional leadership has a unique and significant influence on teacher performance beyond the effects of work discipline, while work discipline's effect may be partially absorbed when leadership is accounted for, highlighting the interplay and potential interaction between structural and behavioral factors in shaping teacher performance.

Based on the discussion of the partial correlation test above, it is known that the presence of the job satisfaction variable (X_3) will have an influence on the relationship between transactional leadership (X_1) and teacher performance (Y). This means that it is indicated by the increase in the correlation coefficient from 0.863 to 0.903, meaning that the relationship between transactional leadership (X_1) and teacher performance (Y) is significantly influenced by job satisfaction (X_3). Thus, it can be concluded that the transactional leadership variable (X_1) is not the only variable that determines teacher performance (Y) because there are other variables that are also related to teacher performance (Y), namely job satisfaction (X_3).

The results of the analysis of the relationship between work discipline and teacher performance under transactional leadership control are shown in the following table:

Table 3. Results of Partial Correlation Test between Work Discipline and Teacher Performance Transactional Leadership Control

Variables Control: Transactional Leadership)	Teacher Performance	Work Discipline	Transactional Leadership
Teacher Performance	1.000	0.955	0.863
Work Discipline	0.955	1.000	0.859
Transactional Leadership	0.863	0.859	1.000

The partial correlation between teacher performance and work discipline, controlling for transactional leadership, was $r = 0.921$ with a significance level of $p = 0.000$. This indicates a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between work discipline and teacher performance. In other words, when the influence of transactional leadership is accounted for, teachers who demonstrate higher levels of work discipline such as punctuality, adherence to rules, and consistency in completing tasks tend to achieve higher performance outcomes.

This result highlights that work discipline independently contributes to teacher performance even when leadership structures are present. It suggests that while transactional leadership provides guidance and accountability, disciplined work behavior is a critical behavioral mechanism that directly translates organizational expectations into tangible performance results. Practically, this emphasizes the importance of fostering a disciplined work culture within schools to sustain high levels of teacher effectiveness.

Based on the discussion of the partial correlation test above, it is known that the presence of transactional leadership variables (X_1) will have an influence on the relationship between work discipline (X_2) and teacher performance (Y). This means that it is indicated by a decrease in the correlation coefficient from 0.955 to 0.921, meaning that the relationship between work discipline (X_2) and teacher performance (Y) is significantly influenced by transactional leadership (X_1). Thus, it can be concluded that the work discipline variable (X_2) is not the only variable that determines teacher performance (Y) because there are other variables that are also related to teacher performance (Y), namely transactional leadership (X_1).

The results of the analysis of the relationship between work discipline and teacher performance and job satisfaction are shown in the following table:

Table 4. Results of Partial Correlation Test between Work Discipline and Teacher Performance Job Satisfaction Control

Variables (Control: Job Satisfaction)	Teacher Performance	Work Discipline	Job Satisfaction
Teacher Performance	1.000	0.955	0.962
Work Discipline	0.955	1.000	0.812
Job Satisfaction	0.962	0.812	1.000

When controlling for job satisfaction, the partial correlation between teacher performance and work discipline was $r = 0.908$, with a significance level of $p = 0.000$, indicating

a strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This demonstrates that even when the effects of job satisfaction are held constant, disciplined work behavior such as punctuality, adherence to school regulations, and consistent task completion remains a major predictor of teacher performance. The slightly lower correlation compared to the zero-order correlation ($r = 0.955$) suggests that while job satisfaction contributes to teacher performance, work discipline maintains its dominant influence. This finding underscores that behavioral factors provide a structural foundation for performance, and that motivation or satisfaction alone cannot fully compensate for inconsistent or undisciplined work practices. Overall, the results highlight that work discipline is a critical factor in translating organizational expectations into effective teaching outcomes, and it interacts with psychological factors like job satisfaction to shape overall teacher performance.

Based on the discussion of the partial correlation test above, it is known that the presence of the job satisfaction variable (X_3) will have an influence on the relationship between work discipline (X_2) and teacher performance (Y). This means that it is indicated by a decrease in the correlation coefficient from 0.955 to 0.908, meaning that the relationship between work discipline (X_2) and teacher performance (Y) is significantly influenced by job satisfaction (X_3). Thus, it can be concluded that the work discipline variable (X_2) is not the only variable that determines teacher performance (Y) because there are other variables that are also related to teacher performance (Y), namely job satisfaction (X_3).

The results of the analysis of the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance under transactional leadership control are shown in the following table:

Table 5. Results of Partial Correlation Test between Job Satisfaction and Teacher Performance
Transactional Leadership Control

Variables (Control: Job Satisfaction)	Teacher Performance	Job Satisfaction	Transactional Leadership
Teacher Performance	1.000	0.962	0.863
Job Satisfaction	0.962	1.000	0.964
Transactional Leadership	0.863	0.964	1.000

When controlling for job satisfaction, the partial correlation between teacher performance and transactional leadership was $r = 0.982$, with a significance level of $p = 0.000$. This indicates an extremely strong and statistically significant positive relationship, suggesting that transactional leadership characterized by clear role expectations, reward systems, and structured supervision remains a decisive factor in influencing teacher performance even when job satisfaction is accounted for. The increase in correlation compared to the zero-order correlation between teacher performance and transactional leadership ($r = 0.863$) implies that controlling for job satisfaction amplifies the apparent influence of transactional leadership on performance. This may indicate a suppressor effect, where variations in job satisfaction partially obscure the true strength of the leadership-performance relationship when not controlled.

These results emphasize that transactional leadership functions as a structural and guiding mechanism, providing teachers with the clarity, feedback, and accountability necessary to achieve performance targets. Even in contexts where teachers may vary in their satisfaction

levels, effective transactional leadership consistently drives outcomes, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping teacher effectiveness.

Based on the discussion of the partial correlation test above, it is known that the presence of transactional leadership variables (X_1) will have an influence on the relationship between job satisfaction (X_3) and teacher performance (Y). This means that the increase in the correlation coefficient from 0.962 to 0.982 means that the relationship between job satisfaction (X_3) and teacher performance (Y) is significantly influenced by transactional leadership (X_1). Thus, it can be concluded that the job satisfaction variable (X_3) is not the only variable that determines teacher performance (Y) because there are other variables that are also related to teacher performance (Y), namely transactional leadership (X_1).

Discussion

The findings indicate that transactional leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction each maintain a meaningful relationship with teacher performance, even when examined alongside relevant control variables. Transactional leadership consistently contributes to teacher performance, suggesting that clear role expectations, reward mechanisms, and structured supervision remain effective drivers of performance regardless of variations in work discipline or job satisfaction. This supports previous studies by Ambarita et al. (2025), Purwanto et al. (2020), and Handayani and Kristiawan (2020), which emphasize the direct role of transactional leadership in shaping teacher performance through clarity and accountability rather than solely through psychological or behavioral factors.

Transactional leadership, characterized by clear role expectations, reward contingencies, and structured supervision, aligns closely with Path Goal Theory (Northouse, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024), which posits that leaders facilitate subordinate performance by clarifying paths to goals and removing obstacles. In this study, transactional leadership consistently enhanced teacher performance even when other factors were controlled. This suggests that structured guidance and accountability mechanisms effectively translate organizational goals into concrete outcomes. International research conducted in diverse educational contexts supports this notion: transactional leadership has been found to improve task clarity and performance assessment, particularly in resource-constrained environments (Khan et al., 2025; Lee & Smith, 2024). Thus, rather than merely influencing motivation indirectly, transactional leadership functions as a direct structural driver of performance through its emphasis on role clarity, feedback, and contingent reinforcement.

Work discipline emerged as an even stronger determinant of performance, retaining its independent influence irrespective of leadership and job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the Job Characteristics Model (Fried & Ferris, 2024) and contemporary organizational behavior research that highlights the centrality of consistent behavior and role adherence for sustained performance. Disciplined work

behavior manifested through regular attendance, compliance with professional norms, and timely completion of tasks serves as the mechanism through which organizational intentions and leadership directives materialize into observable teacher outcomes. Recent empirical evidence underscores the behavioral foundational role of discipline in educational settings, showing that disciplined teachers are more likely to implement curricula effectively, manage classrooms efficiently, and adapt to evolving educational demands (Fiannisa et al., 2024; Zulia, 2025; Martinez & Walker, 2025). This aligns with recent meta-analytic findings that show work discipline as a robust predictor of performance across sectors, even after accounting for leadership and motivational influences (Dewi, 2025; Liu & Wang, 2023; Mawla, 2026).

Job satisfaction also demonstrated a robust relationship with teacher performance and remained influential when transactional leadership was controlled. Consistent with Naimah (2022), this finding confirms that satisfaction functions as a key psychological driver that enhances intrinsic motivation and commitment to teaching tasks. However, the results suggest that job satisfaction operates more as an internal motivational force, while work discipline and leadership provide the external structure necessary for sustained performance. Job satisfaction was also demonstrated to significantly influence teacher performance. Conceptually, this aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1966) and recent extensions of motivational theories (Ngala, 2025), which emphasize that intrinsic motivational factors, such as professional fulfillment, recognition, and a sense of meaningful work, enhance commitment and sustained effort. However, unlike leadership and discipline, job satisfaction functions primarily as a psychological enabler rather than a structural determinant. It strengthens internal motivation and engagement, enabling teachers to capitalize on the opportunities created by structured leadership and behavioral expectations. Contemporary research confirms that job satisfaction enhances teacher engagement, resilience, and instructional quality, particularly when supported by positive school climates and collaborative cultures (Johnson et al., 2025).

The integration of these variables highlights an interactive model in which structural factors (transactional leadership and work discipline) provide the necessary foundation for teacher performance, while psychological factors (job satisfaction) amplify and sustain performance within that framework. Implicitly, the findings suggest partial mediation and synergistic effects: transactional leadership and work discipline set the stage, and job satisfaction enhances teachers' capacity to translate structural support into long-term performance. This interactive model is supported by global scholarship emphasizing that performance improves most when leadership, organizational expectations, and motivation operate in concert rather than in isolation (Day et al., 2024; Bush & Glover, 2025).

Importantly, this study contributes context-specific insights from the Indonesian educational environment. In public elementary schools where resource constraints, high student-teacher ratios, and bureaucratic procedures can impede teacher performance, the interaction between leadership, discipline, and job satisfaction becomes especially salient. While structural components ensure order, predictability, and role accountability, teachers' psychological engagement through satisfaction compensates for systemic challenges and supports adaptive professional practice. This finding enriches the global understanding of teacher performance by illustrating how structural and psychological dynamics interact under conditions that are typical of non-Western, resource-limited educational systems.

Overall, the use of control variables clarifies that teacher performance is shaped by an interaction between structural factors (leadership and discipline) and psychological factors (job satisfaction). Theoretically, this study specifies how these variables function independently and complementarily within educational organizations. Practically, the findings imply that school leaders should not rely solely on motivational strategies but must balance supportive leadership with firm discipline and policies that foster teacher satisfaction to achieve consistent and sustainable performance outcomes.

Conclusion

This study concludes that teacher performance is significantly and positively influenced by transactional leadership, work discipline, and job satisfaction, with work discipline and job satisfaction emerging as the most influential factors, followed by transactional leadership. These findings contribute theoretically to the field of educational management by affirming that teacher performance is shaped by the interaction between structural factors—such as leadership practices and organizational discipline—and psychological factors, particularly job satisfaction, within a non-Western educational context. However, this study is not without limitations, including its cross-sectional design, which restricts causal interpretation, the reliance on self-reported data that may introduce subjective bias, and the focus on a single district that limits generalizability. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs, incorporate moderating variables such as school climate, administrative support, and teacher experience, and employ qualitative approaches to gain deeper contextual insights into teachers' lived experiences. Practically, the findings underscore the importance for school leaders and policymakers to implement integrated, evidence-based strategies that combine effective leadership practices, consistent enforcement of work discipline, and initiatives aimed at enhancing job satisfaction through professional development, recognition, and supportive work environments, thereby fostering

sustainable improvements in teacher effectiveness, student learning outcomes, and overall school performance.

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Authors' Note

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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