

Influence of Effective School Leadership on Teachers' Performance: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract. This systematic literature review examines the impact of effective school leadership on teachers' performance, focusing on various leadership styles and practices. It has been demonstrated that good leadership has a favorable impact on teachers' performance. This leadership is typified by establishing clear ideas and goals, offering assistance, cultivating a positive school culture, implementing effective communication, and inspiring respect and trust. A dearth of longitudinal studies, contradictory results, and little research conducted in various circumstances are among the notable gaps in the literature that the review points out. Research gaps can be filled, and the scope of the study can be widened so that stakeholders in education have a deeper knowledge of how various leadership methods and styles impact teachers' effectiveness. Using this knowledge, methods to improve school leaders' efficacy will be developed, ultimately improving student learning results.

Keywords: School leadership; Teachers' performance; Leadership styles; Systematic review.

1.0 Introduction

The foundation of organizations lies in their leaders, who are accountable for bringing together team members, inspiring them, addressing difficult challenges in high-pressure situations, and staying composed during tough circumstances (Adminhr, 2023). School leaders, especially principals, need to keep their teachers motivated to have high-performing teachers (Cruickshank, 2017). In addition, to effectively lead and manage a school, leaders must possess a wide range of knowledge beyond their formal education. This includes expertise in curriculum and instruction, fiscal management, human resources, public relations, effective communication skills, and more. (Hansen, 2016).

Moreover, Leithwood et al. (2019) highlighted that being a leader goes beyond having a clear vision, mission, and goal; a leader must know how to create a working environment that fosters collaboration, which results in opportunities for personal and professional growth among teachers. Although previous studies have already provided significant insights into different aspects of how school leaders are influencing teachers' performance, some findings contradict each other. Even though numerous studies mentioned that effective leadership has a direct influence on teachers' performance, Imig et al. (2014, as cited in Naim & Dabash, 2018) suggest that effective leadership alone may not be sufficient to improve teacher performance if the teachers themselves lack the necessary skills or abilities.

The aim of this systematic review is to collate and summarize the results of recent studies about how or in what way leaders influence their teachers' competence and performance and answer the question: Which leadership styles have a significant influence on teachers' performance?

2.0 Methodology

This study used a systematic literature review to determine the influence of effective leadership on teachers' performance. A systematic literature review, or simply systematic review, is a methodologically rigorous approach to synthesizing research evidence on specific educational questions. This method involves meticulously identifying and analyzing relevant research studies to gather significant data. It also involves systematically combining all the existing research findings to identify what was already known and to answer specific research questions (Gough et al., 2017).

According to Munn et al. (2018), a systematic review uses clear and systematic methods that are selected to minimize bias, thus providing more reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn and decisions made. This literature review was conducted using different academic databases, namely Google Scholar and other databases, and using the keywords school leadership, principal effectiveness, teacher performance, and effective leadership style. This literature review used studies published from 2016 to date focusing on the influence of effective school leadership on teachers' performance. Table 1 shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Parameters	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Type of Research	Studies that are published in peer-reviewed journals and scholarly publications	Book reviews, editorials, literary work analysis, and evaluation
Result of the Study	Research articles, journals, or scientific papers that investigate the correlation between effective leadership practices and their influence	Research articles, journals, or scientific papers that have no connection to the influence of effective leaders
Language	Research articles, journals, or scientific papers about the influence of leaders in the English Language	Research articles, journals, or scientific papers about the influence of leaders that are not in the English Language
Data Base	Access to Google Scholar and other databases	Databases that the researcher does not have access to
Time Frame	Research articles, journals, or scientific papers about the influence of leaders published from 2016 to 2024	Research articles, journals, or scientific papers about the influence of leaders that are not published from 2016 to 2024

Articles from valid publications are the primary factor taken into account when choosing which ones to include in the inclusion criteria in conversations with other experts regarding the methodology and importance of research projects. Table 2 below shows the research articles included in this systematic literature review and the author's name and publication date.

Table 2. Research articles included in the systematic review of the literature

Research No.	Authors	Research Title	Publication Year
1	Greatheart, S.	Perceptions of Leadership Influence on Teachers' Professional Development	2023
2	De Castro & Jimenez	Influence of School Principal's Attributes and 21st-Century Leadership Skills on Teachers' Performance	2022
3	Bradford, W.	The Impact of Highly Effective Leadership Practices on School Culture	2023
4	Herring, A.E.	The Impact of Effective and Ineffective Principal Leadership on Teacher Morale	2023
5	Paige, M.	The Influence of School Leadership that Cultivates Teachers' Instructional Capacity.	2023
6	Kartini, et al.	The Influence of Principal's Leadership, Academic Supervision, and Professional Competence toward Teachers' Performance	2020
7	Hansen, K.	Effective School Leadership Practices in Schools With Positive Climates in the Age of High-Stakes Teacher Evaluations	2016
8	Voelkel et al.	Effective Principal Leadership Behaviors That Enhance Teacher Collective Efficacy	2024
9	Chalikias, et al.	The school principal's role as a leader in teachers' professional development: the case of public secondary education in Athens	2020
10	Nasra, M.A.	Leadership style and teacher performance: mediating role of occupational perception	2020
11	Sarwar, et al.	Principals' leadership styles and its impact on teachers' performance at college	2022

		level	
12	Elkhder & Onia	The Effect Of Principals' Management Styles on Teachers' Performance in Private Primary Schools in Omdurman Locality in Sudan	2021
13	Andriani, et al.	The Influence Of The Transformational Leadership And Work Motivation On Teachers Performance	2018
14	Hsieh et al.	Impact of school leadership on teacher professional collaboration: evidence from multilevel analysis of Taiwan TALIS 2018	2018
15	Badrun et al.	The Influence of Principal's Leadership Style on Teacher Performance	2022
16	Ath, C.S.	Impact of School Principals' Leadership on Teaching Quality and Students' Achievement: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	2022
17	Karatas et al.	Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Effective School Features and Effective Leadership Qualifications of School Principals in Turkey	2024
18	Farooq et al.	A Study of Leadership Styles and Teachers' Performance	2022
19	Kavitha et al.	Transforming Education: Exploring Leadership Dynamics And Teachers' Performance In 21st Century Schools	2024
20	Loretta et al.	Influence of School Leadership Styles on Teachers' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria	2023

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Ways in Which Effective School Leadership Impacts Teachers' Performance

Effective leadership is crucial to an organization's success. Leaders' roles extend beyond leading and managing. They are also responsible for creating a work climate where everyone is on the same page and where creativity and innovation can flourish. There are different ways in which effective school leadership impacts teachers' performance. Table 3 represents the research findings that effective school leaders influence teachers' performance. It summarizes several leadership categories that demonstrate significant impacts on teachers' performance.

Table 3. Ways in which effective school leadership impacts teachers' performance	
Effective School Leadership	Research Article/s
Setting a Clear Vision and Goals	2, 3, 16
Providing Support	1, 4, 5, 6, 1, 5
Creating a Positive School Culture	3, 5, 8
Implementing Effective Communication	2, 4, 7, 9, 4, 5, 7
Building Trust and Respect	1, 2, 7, 8

In terms of setting a clear vision and goals, according to Day, et al. (2020), school leaders who have a clear vision, goals, and set of values for their school have a significant impact on their actions and the actions of other people around them creating a sense of direction and purpose most especially if these are well communicated and understood.

In terms of providing support, research shows that teachers who receive support and guidance from their leaders or principals are inclined to do better as teachers see it as a motivation to strive for the best (Kristiawan et al., 2020). Other research findings also suggest that teachers' performance is significantly influenced by school leaders who constantly initiate developmental opportunities, like seminars, workshops, and professional learning communities, highlighting strategies to improve the teaching and learning process (Greatheart, 2023).

Leaders play an important role in creating a positive school culture and a positive working environment. Voelkel et al. (2024) stated that leaders who promote a healthy, collaborative, and supportive environment increase the chance of having teachers who strive to do better.

In terms of implementing effective communication, Bucăța & Marius (2017) stated that effective communication is a significant key to a harmonious relationship between leaders and subordinates. Moreover, it highlighted that effective communication is crucial for a high-performing team. The research emphasized that teachers with a leader who initiates conversations through different channels like feedback or simply having a simple dialogue show a big improvement in classroom management and practices. It also highlighted that effective communication is not just about leaders giving personalized feedback to teachers but also the other way around (Hansen, 2016).

Regarding building trust and respect, research findings state that teachers' confidence is significantly connected to their level of trust toward their leaders. According to the studies, a teacher's sense of empowerment in their professional positions is correlated with their faith in their principals. The results also imply that teachers' opinions of the success of their peers and leaders are correlated with their self-confidence. As a result, principals are essential in helping teachers develop a sense of trust and empowerment in order to increase their individual and group efficacy (Voelkel et al., 2024).

3.2 Leadership Styles / Practices

As shown in Table 4, influential leaders also use different leadership styles and practices to help teachers.

Table 4. Leadership practices of school leaders that have impacted teachers' performance

Leadership Practices	Research Article/s
Democratic Leadership	4, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18
Transformational Leadership	4, 10, 13, 19, 20
Autocratic Leadership	4, 11, 18
Laissez-faire style	11, 12, 18

Democratic leadership refers to leaders distributing tasks or workloads to other members of the team and involves sharing decision-making. Studies found that leaders who use this kind of leadership positively affect their teachers' performance. It is also revealed that there is a positive correlation between democratic leadership and good progression in teachers' performance (Sarwar et al., 2022). This result was also supported by the study conducted by Farooq et al. (2022), which found that democratic leadership benefits teachers' performance. Despite that, studies determined that this leadership style does not significantly affect teachers' performance.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders lead their teachers by emphasizing what they need to focus on in their profession. Leaders who use this style also emphasize motivational maturity and help their teachers be more conscious of what is right and beneficial for them and the school (Okeke et al., 2023). Moreover, according to Andriani et al. (2018), transformational leadership positively correlates with teachers' performance as it shows better leadership and improved performance.

Autocratic leadership is where leaders give instructions and a list of things their members need to accomplish. Leaders who execute this kind of leadership do not let their team members participate in decision-making or give out suggestions. Although this kind of leadership is authoritative, studies also show that this leadership style has been successful since their followers or members find it encouraging, and it gives them a sense of motivation because things get done speedily due to decision-making (Sarwar et al., 2022). However, this result contradicted what Elkhder and Onia (2021) stated in their study, which stated that autocratic leadership has no significant effect on teachers' performance as it shows no correlation.

Laissez-faire style is a type of leadership in which team members also have the power to make decisions. They have the choice of how they will set goals and the power to decide how to solve problems if they arise. This style also highlights the independence of the followers or team members from the leader (Sarwar et al., 2022). As a result, studies have shown that this type of leadership was not significantly related to improving teachers' performance (Farooq et al., 2022).

3.3. Gaps in the Research Articles

The research on the influence of good school leadership on teachers' performance indicates several limitations. There are conflicting results: although some research points to the benefits of leadership, others show that if teachers lack the necessary abilities or drive, leadership is insufficient (Imig et al., 2014, as referenced in Naim & Dabash, 2018). Generalizability is limited because research frequently concentrates on particular areas or systems. Further research in various cultural, socioeconomic, and educational situations is required.

Many current research studies are cross-sectional, providing a simple moment in time. Longitudinal research is necessary to comprehend the long-term consequences of leadership philosophies. Furthermore, most studies ignore other leadership figures like department heads and instructional coaches instead of focusing only on principals. Lastly, while some leadership philosophies have been studied, others—like dispersed and servant

leadership—have received less attention. Closing these gaps will improve our understanding of how various leadership philosophies affect instructors' effectiveness.

4.0 Conclusion

This systematic review of the evidence emphasizes how crucial good school leadership is in influencing teachers' effectiveness. Teachers clearly benefit from a variety of leadership philosophies and techniques, such as establishing clear objectives and goals, offering assistance, cultivating a pleasant school climate, putting effective communication into practice, and establishing a climate of trust and respect. Nevertheless, the literature reveals notable gaps, such as inconsistent findings, limited research across diverse contexts, and a scarcity of longitudinal studies, highlighting critical areas for future investigation. Addressing these gaps and broadening the research scope will enable educational stakeholders to develop a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how leadership styles and practices affect teachers' performance. This enhanced knowledge is essential for devising strategies to bolster the effectiveness of school leaders, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes for students.

To address the identified gaps, future research should include longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of leadership styles on teachers' performance, enhancing understanding of the sustainability of various leadership practices. Studies should also expand to diverse cultural, socio-economic, and educational contexts to improve the generalizability of findings and provide a global perspective on leadership's influence. Additionally, research should investigate a broader range of school leadership roles, including department heads, vice principals, and instructional coaches, to offer a nuanced understanding of how different leadership figures contribute to teachers' performance.

Moreover, exploring additional leadership styles, such as servant leadership, instructional leadership, and distributed leadership, can help identify the most effective approaches. Addressing inconsistent findings requires further research to reconcile the varied impacts of leadership on performance, considering factors like teachers' initial competencies, motivation, and existing support systems. This comprehensive approach will clarify how leadership influences teachers' performance and guide the development of effective leadership strategies in education.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The systematic review was carried out by a single author, with the guidance of Dr. Leonora De F. Jesus, currently the Associate Dean of Graduate School at Bulacan State University. The review process included conceptualizing the study, searching the literature, screening and choosing studies, gathering data, analyzing the data, and summarizing the results. Critical thinking and careful attention to detail were crucial to ensure a comprehensive and transparent analysis at every review stage.

6.0 Funding

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares that no financial conflicts of interest are associated with this study. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the author's perspective regarding the impact of strong leadership on teachers' performance may have indirectly influenced the research. The author has made every effort to conduct the review impartially and thoroughly, guaranteeing that personal prejudices do not undermine the analysis's quality.

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