MJP Journal of Education and Teaching Learning
Vol.4, No. 2 (2026): 1374 – 1378
https://jurnalilmiah.co.id/index.php/MJPJETL

THE ETHICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE PRINCIPAL TOWARDS THE PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS AT STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1 KARANGANOM

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Article Info

Keywords:
Ethical leadership, teacher professional performance, educational management

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of ethical leadership of school principals on teachers' professional performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganom. This research employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to examine the causal relationship between variables. The population consisted of all teachers, and the sampling technique used was total sampling with 66 respondents. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a Likert scale that has been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression with the assistance of SPSS software, including t-test and coefficient of determination analysis. The results indicate that ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' professional performance, with a coefficient of determination "(R^2) of 0.323". These findings show that higher implementation of ethical leadership leads to improved teacher performance in carrying out learning tasks. This study confirms that ethical leadership practices play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of teacher performance in a sustainable manner.

Article Information

Kata Kunci:
Kepemimpinan etis,kinerja profesional guru, manajemen pendidikan.

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kepemimpinan etis kepala sekolah terhadap kinerja profesional guru di SMA Negeri 1 Karanganom. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain explanatory untuk menguji hubungan kausal antar variabel. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh guru dengan teknik pengambilan sampel menggunakan total sampling sebanyak 66 responden. Pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan kuesioner dengan skala Likert yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan regresi linear sederhana dengan bantuan perangkat lunak SPSS melalui uji t dan koefisien determinasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan etis kepala sekolah berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja profesional guru, dengan nilai koefisien determinasi (R^2) sebesar 0.323. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa semakin tinggi penerapan kepemimpinan etis, semakin meningkat kinerja guru dalam melaksanakan tugas pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kepemimpinan berbasis nilai etika menjadi faktor penting dalam meningkatkan kualitas kinerja guru secara berkelanjutan.

Article History

Received : 15/08/2026
Revised : 10/09/2026
Accepted : 21/10/2026

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1. Introduction

Teacher professional performance is a primary determinant of the quality of learning and educational outcomes. Teachers are required to consistently demonstrate pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. However, recent empirical findings indicate that teacher professional performance varies across educational units and is not yet fully optimal (Hasan et al., 2022; Collie, 2021; Liu et al., 2023). Other findings indicate that school leadership factors contribute to improving the quality of teacher professional performance (Nguyen et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). This variation indicates that improving professional performance is not only influenced by individual factors but also significantly influenced by leadership factors at the school level (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hallinger, 2022). In this context, principal leadership is a strategic factor in creating a work environment that supports sustainable teacher performance improvement (Bush, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Udin, 2024).

The ethical leadership of principals emphasizes integrity, fairness, and moral responsibility in organizational decision-making. The Social Learning Theory perspective proposed by Albert Bandura explains that individuals learn behavior through observation, imitation, and internalization of authority figures. This theory remains relevant and widely used in contemporary educational leadership research because it explains the process of shaping professional behavior in educational organizations. In the educational context, principals act as role models who influence teachers' professional behavior. Recent research shows that ethical leadership has a significant influence on work behavior and performance through social learning mechanisms (Wang et al., 2022; Bedi et al., 2021; Kim & Thapa, 2022; Bavik et al., 2018; Udin, 2023). Furthermore, Yasir et al. (2022) emphasized that internalizing organizational ethical values can sustainably improve individual performance. Other findings also indicate that ethical leadership contributes to increased commitment and positive work behavior in educational organizations (Lee et al., 2022; Hasan et al., 2022).

Ethical leadership in educational organizations serves not only as a behavioral control mechanism but also as a source of social learning for teachers. Albert Bandura explained that individuals tend to imitate the behavior of leaders as role models in organizations. Ethical leadership in this study was operationalized based on the dimensions developed by Kalshoven et al. (2011), which include honesty, fairness, exemplary behavior, caring, and clear work directions. These dimensions align with Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of role models in shaping individual behavior. Meanwhile, teacher professional performance in this study was measured based on Supardi's (2012) indicators, which include learning planning, learning implementation, and learning evaluation as the core of teachers' professional duties.

Teacher professional performance in this study was also analyzed through the perspective of organizational trust theory developed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995). This theory remains relevant and is widely used in modern organizational research to explain the relationship between trust and work behavior and individual performance. This theory emphasizes that trust in leaders is built through three main dimensions: ability, benevolence, and integrity. This trust plays a crucial role in increasing teachers' work engagement and professional responsibility. Recent research shows that trust in leaders has a direct relationship with improved individual performance and organizational effectiveness (Dirks et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Thus, ethical leadership functions not only as a normative value but also as a strategic mechanism for improving the quality of teachers' professional performance.

Although the relationship between ethical leadership and performance has been extensively studied, significant research gaps remain. Previous research has tended to be conducted in the context of business organizations and non-educational sectors (Bedi et al., 2021; Kim & Thapa, 2022), resulting in limited studies in secondary education settings. Furthermore, most studies emphasize the role of mediating variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment rather than examining the direct influence of ethical leadership on teacher professional performance (Wang et al., 2022; Kim & Thapa, 2022). Research in the Indonesian educational context is also relatively limited and has not integrated Social Learning Theory as a primary analytical framework.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the influence of principals' ethical leadership on teachers' professional performance. This study offers novelty by directly examining the relationship between the two variables in the context of secondary education in Indonesia, using the Social Learning Theory perspective as the basis for analysis. The research hypothesis is that principals' ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' professional performance. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management studies and practical contributions to improving the quality of principals' leadership in supporting teacher performance.

2. Research methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design that aims to analyze the predictive relationship between the ethical leadership of the principal as an independent variable and the professional performance of teachers as a dependent variable. This approach was chosen to obtain an empirical explanation of the relationship between variables through systematic, objective, and measurable hypothesis testing. The study was conducted in 2026 at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganom. The population in this study were all 66 active teachers. The sampling technique used total sampling, namely all members of the population were used as research samples. This technique was used because the population size was relatively small so that all members of the population could be reached and included in the study. This approach is in line with the opinion of Suharsimi Arikunto who stated that if the population size is less than 100, the entire population can be used as research samples.

The data used in this study were primary data obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents. The research instrument was developed based on predetermined variable indicators. The principal's ethical leadership variable was measured based on the dimensions developed by Kalshoven et al. (2011), which include honesty, fairness, exemplary behavior, concern for teachers, and clarity of work directions. Meanwhile, the teacher's professional performance variable was measured based on Supardi's (2012) indicators, namely learning planning, learning implementation, and learning evaluation. The research instrument used a Likert scale with a score range of 1 to 5 to measure respondents' level of agreement with each statement.

Before being used in data collection, the research instruments were first tested for validity and reliability. Validity testing was conducted using Product Moment correlation to determine the accuracy of each statement item in measuring the research variables. Reliability testing was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The research procedure was carried out systematically through the stages of preparation, implementation, and data analysis. The preparation stage included literature review and the preparation of research instruments. The implementation stage was carried out by distributing questionnaires to all respondents. The data analysis stage was carried out after the data were collected and tabulated for further statistical analysis.

The data analysis techniques in this study included descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of the data through the mean value, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. Next, prerequisite analysis tests were conducted, including normality tests and heteroscedasticity tests to check relevant assumptions in the regression analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to determine the direction and significance of the predictive relationship between the principal's ethical leadership and teacher professional performance. This analysis was supplemented with a t-test to test the significance of the regression coefficient and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the proportion of variation in teacher professional performance that can be explained by the regression model. The entire data analysis process was carried out using SPSS software.

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design, meaning data were collected over a single period. This design allows for predictive analysis of the relationship between principals' ethical leadership and teachers' professional performance, but limits the study's ability to definitively establish a causal relationship. Therefore, the results of the regression analysis in this study are interpreted as predictive statistical relationships and are not considered definitive evidence of a causal relationship.

3. Research Results and Discussion

1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of principals' ethical leadership scores and teachers' professional performance based on data from 66 respondents. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ethical leadership of the principal	66	32	50	45.06	4.89
Teacher professional performance	66	36	50	45.14	4.20

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS.

Based on Table 1, the principal's ethical leadership had an average score of 45.06 with a score range of 32–50, while the teacher's professional performance had an average score of 45.14 with a score range of 36–50. Both variables showed a relatively high score trend. Standard deviations of 4.89 and 4.20, respectively, illustrate the distribution of respondents' scores around their average value. However, a high score trend does not necessarily prove that all aspects of ethical leadership and professional performance have been optimally implemented. This interpretation needs to consider the score distribution and characteristics of the measurement instrument.

2. Test the Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity test was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the score of each statement item and the total score of the relevant variable. The test involved 66 respondents with a significance level of 5% (two-tailed) and 64 degrees of freedom, resulting in a table value of approximately 0.242. The analysis results showed that the correlation of items with the total score on the principal's ethical leadership variable ranged from 0.729–0.860, while on the teacher's professional performance variable ranged from 0.719–0.837. All correlation values were greater than the table and had a significance value below 0.05. Thus, all 10 items in each variable met the validity criteria based on the testing procedure used.rr

The instrument's reliability was further tested using Cronbach's Alpha. SPSS results showed an alpha value of 0.929 for the principal's ethical leadership variable and 0.927 for the teacher's professional performance variable, each consisting of 10 statements. Both values exceeded the 0.70 criterion, indicating good internal consistency for both instruments. These validity and reliability test results support the use of the total scores for both variables in subsequent regression analyses.

3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the predictive relationship between principal ethical leadership as the independent variable and teacher professional performance as the dependent variable. The results of the model analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.568a	.323	.312	3,482

a. Predictors: (Constant), X
b. Dependent Variable: Y

The value indicates a positive relationship with moderate strength between the ethical leadership of the principal and the professional performance of teachers. The value indicates that the regression model explains 32.3% of the variation in the teacher professional performance score, while the remaining 67.7% is not explained by the predictors in the model. This unexplained variation may be related to other factors not included in the model or individual and measurement variations. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.312 is an estimate of the adjusted coefficient of determination, while the standard error of the estimate of 3.482 indicates the magnitude of the prediction error in the unit of teacher professional performance score.$R =$

$0{,}568R^2 = 0{,}323$

The model significance test using ANOVA analysis yielded a value of . This result indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. Thus, the principal's ethical leadership has a significant predictive relationship with teacher professional performance in this study's data.$F(1, 64) = 30{,}495p < 0{,}001$

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Coefficients

Coefficientsa						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	23,169	4,001		5,791	.000
	X	.488	.088	.568	5,522	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

4. Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the ethical leadership of the principal has a positive and significant relationship with the professional performance of teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganom. The results of simple linear regression show a regression coefficient of 0.488, values of , and , with a coefficient of determination () of 0.323. These results indicate that the ethical leadership of the principal can explain 32.3% of the variation in the professional performance of teachers in the research model. These findings indicate that the higher the ethical leadership score of the principal, the higher the tendency of the professional performance score of teachers.$t = 5{,}522p < 0{,}001R^2$

Theoretically, these findings align with Social Learning Theory, which explains that individuals can learn behavior through observing and modeling figures in their environment. In the school context, the integrity, fairness, responsibility, and exemplary behavior of the principal can serve as an example for teachers in carrying out their professional duties. Therefore, ethical leadership is relevant to consider in school management, although the modeling mechanism was not directly tested in this study.

Descriptive statistics show that the average score for principal ethical leadership was 45.06 and for teachers' professional performance was 45.14, reflecting a tendency for relatively high scores. However, the accumulation of ethical leadership scores at a maximum of 50 indicates a possible ceiling effect. This condition may limit the instrument's ability to distinguish high-scoring respondents and potentially affect the estimation of relationships between variables. However, the magnitude of the ceiling effect's impact on regression coefficients and scores cannot be ascertained based solely on the histogram.R^2

Overall, the results confirm that ethical leadership is a relevant predictor of teacher professional performance, but it is not the sole factor explaining its variation. Because the study used a cross-sectional survey design with 66 respondents from a single school, these findings cannot be used to establish a causal relationship and should be generalized with caution. Future research is recommended to involve more schools and use instruments that are more sensitive to the high score range to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the two variables.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the principal's ethical leadership has a positive and significant predictive relationship with teacher professional performance at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganom. The results of simple linear regression show a regression coefficient of 0.488 () and a coefficient of determination () of 0.323, meaning the model explains 32.3% of the variation in teacher professional performance. These findings confirm the relevance of integrity, fairness, responsibility, and role models in school leadership. However, the possibility of a ceiling effect, the cross-sectional study design, and the involvement of respondents from a single school limit causal interpretation and generalization of the results. Therefore, this study supports ethical leadership as a predictor of teacher professional performance, rather than as a direct cause, and recommends further research with a wider school coverage and a more robust design.$p < 0{,}001R^2$

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