

The Effect of Holistic Leadership by School Principals on Teacher Performance and School Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT:

This study aims to analyze the influence of school principals' holistic leadership on teacher performance and school effectiveness at Elite Madrasah Aliyah in Central Java. Holistic leadership is understood as a meta-strategic orientation that adaptively integrates the dimensions of transformational, instructional, distributed, and pedagogical leadership according to the context. The study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive-correlational survey design. The study population consisted of all teachers from two Madrasah Aliyah Unggulan in Central Java, with a sample of 110 teachers selected using total sampling. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire using a Likert scale consisting of 5 indicators per variable (15 statements). Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression with the aid of SPSS. The results indicate that holistic leadership does not have a significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.016$; $t = 0.170$; $p = 0.865$) or on school effectiveness ($\beta = -0.018$; $t = -0.186$; $p = 0.853$). These findings indicate that holistic leadership, when measured in isolation, is not sufficient to directly predict teacher performance and school effectiveness, and that there are other mediating or moderating factors that need to be considered. Practical implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: holistic leadership, teacher performance, school effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Principal leadership is one of the most consistently identified determinants associated with educational quality and school success in various international studies (Mincu et al., 2024). The role of the principal has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, shifting from a purely administrative function to a multifaceted leadership role that encompasses instructional guidance, transformational vision, delegation of authority, and holistic engagement with the entire school community (Gupta,

2025). This shift reflects the increasing complexity of the demands faced by school leaders in the era of contemporary education.

In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, Madrasah Aliyah face a dual challenge: meeting national educational standards while integrating Islamic values into the learning process. Madrasah principals are expected to lead holistically, that is, by adaptively integrating various leadership approaches (Abidin et al., 2024). Research indicates that no single leadership model can fully address the complexity

of these demands; effective school leaders, in fact, combine various leadership strategies tailored to the context of their institutions (Arthur & Souza, 2023).

Holistic leadership, as conceptualized by Marlina (Marlina, 2022), is an integrative approach that focuses on leaders' self-development, the empowerment of followers, and responsiveness to the broader institutional environment. This framework is characterized by the "Three S: Self, Spirit, and Service," which represent the dimensions of Self Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Legacy Leadership. Unlike transformational leadership, which is oriented toward exerting influence on followers, holistic leadership uniquely integrates the leader's personal development as a prerequisite for effective leadership (Asobee & Gemechu, 2022).

Teacher performance is a central variable in the education system because it directly influences the quality of learning and student achievement. Research in various countries has shown that the leadership style of school principals affects teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and professional performance (Panagopoulos et al., 2023; Wilson Heenan et al., 2023a). A study in Greece found a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction ($r = 0.785$; $p < 0.001$), while laissez-faire leadership was negatively correlated with all dimensions of satisfaction (Panagopoulos et al., 2023).

School effectiveness, as a multidimensional construct, is influenced by various organizational factors, including principal leadership, school culture, and human resource conditions (Dimopoulos, 2020). A study using 2015 PISA data from Germany and China shows that different leadership styles yield different relationships with student achievement, depending on the situational context and the characteristics of the principal (Chen et al., 2022). This suggests that school effectiveness is not determined solely by a single type of leadership but rather by the contextual integration of various dimensions of leadership.

Research on leadership in top-performing religious schools in Indonesia particularly regarding holistic leadership and its impact on teacher performance and school effectiveness remains very limited. Most existing studies focus primarily on transformational or distributed leadership in isolation, without integrating them into a comprehensive holistic framework (Karakose et al., 2022). This empirical gap highlights an urgent need for research, particularly in the context of elite madrasah aliyah, which possess unique characteristics within the national education system.

Based on the above discussion, this study formulates the following research questions: (1) Does the principal's holistic leadership have a significant effect on teacher performance at elite Madrasah Aliyah schools in Central Java? (2) Does the principal's holistic leadership have a significant effect on school effectiveness at elite Madrasah Aliyah schools in Central Java?

2. Conceptual Framework And Hypotheses

Holistic Leadership

Holistic leadership in the context of education is an integrative approach that focuses on leaders' self-development, the empowerment of followers, and responsiveness to the institutional environment and the broader community (Marlina, 2022). Marlina defines holistic leadership through the "Three S" framework Self, Spirit, and Service which encompasses the dimensions of Self Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Legacy Leadership. This framework positions the school principal not merely as an administrator, but as a moral agent, a developer of human potential, and a guardian of institutional culture (Marlina, 2022).

This concept aligns with the literature on sustainable leadership, which describes school leadership as holistic, involving an integrative perspective on the past, present, and future, both locally and globally (Mincu et al., 2024). Explicitly propose the Pashiardis-Brauckmann Holistic Leadership Framework as a theoretical tool to bridge the gap between successful and effective schools, integrating various leadership functions into a coherent whole (Pashiardis & Johansson,

2021). Further distinguishes holistic collaborative leadership from transformational leadership by emphasizing that holistic leadership integrates empowerment, trust, communication, and shared leadership practices into the core of the organizational culture (Kaapanda, 2023).

Operationally, the principal's holistic leadership in this study was measured using five indicators: (1) the leader's self-development and integrity (Self Leadership); (2) vision and spiritual values in leadership (Spirit Leadership); (3) a service orientation toward the school community (Service Leadership); (4) the ability to adaptively integrate various leadership strategies (meta-strategic orientation); and (5) the development of an inclusive and collaborative school culture (Mincu et al., 2024).

Teacher Performance

Teacher performance is a multidimensional construct that reflects a teacher's professional quality in carrying out instructional duties (Septiani et al., 2025), curriculum development, and contributions to the school community (Pan & Chen, 2021). In a systematic review of 15 international studies, found that transformational school leadership is positively associated with increased teacher motivation and the development of a more positive school culture (Wilson Heenan et al., 2023). Teachers serve as the primary foundation upon which principals implement their transformational leadership.

(Sofian, 2023) research shows that supportive and transformative leadership enhances educators' commitment to the profession, participation in professional development, and motivation; by fostering a culture of continuous learning and providing targeted support, school leaders create an ecosystem that nurtures educators' development. In this study, teacher performance was measured using five indicators: (1) the quality of lesson planning and delivery; (2) mastery of subject matter and pedagogical competencies; (3) engagement in ongoing professional development; (4) contribution to the

school's learning community; and (5) focus on student achievement (Owen et al., 2020).

School Effectiveness

School effectiveness is understood as a school's organizational capacity to optimally achieve educational goals through the optimization of human resources, the learning process, and the organizational environment (Dimopoulos, 2020). Acera et al. (2023), in a descriptive-correlational study in the Philippines, found a significant relationship between school administrators' leadership practices and overall school performance, demonstrating the validity of General Systems Theory, whereby the principal's practices influence teacher performance, and both together influence the school's overall performance.

A study by Mincu et al. (2024) shows that principals who are successful in promoting better teaching and learning and improving school culture, particularly in terms of student behavior, attendance, motivation, and engagement. In this study, school effectiveness is operationalized through five indicators: (1) achievement of the school's vision and mission; (2) the quality of the learning process and student achievement; (3) a conducive school climate and culture; (4) the efficiency of school organizational management; and (5) stakeholder involvement in school development.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical and empirical studies above, the principal's holistic leadership is positioned as an independent variable that directly influences teacher performance (Y1) and school effectiveness (Y2). This relationship is based on the premise that leaders who integrate the dimensions of self-development, spirituality, and service will be better able to create an organizational environment conducive to teachers' professional development and the achievement of school goals (Farley, 2024; Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020).

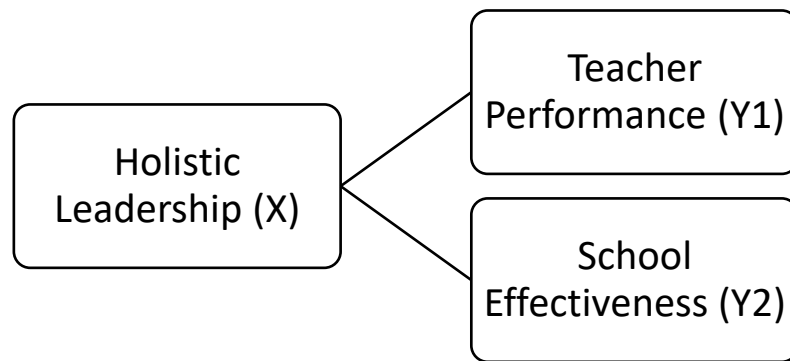


Figure 1. Research Framework

Based on this conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The holistic leadership of school principals has a significant effect on teacher performance at Elite Madrasah Aliyah in Central Java.

H2: The holistic leadership of school principals has a significant effect on school effectiveness at elite Madrasah Aliyah schools in Central Java.

3. Methodology

• **Design:**

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive-correlational survey design. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the study's objectives: to describe the conditions of the research variables and to statistically analyze the relationships and influences among the variables. The primary analysis used was simple linear regression to test the influence of the independent variable (holistic leadership) on each dependent variable (teacher performance and school effectiveness).

• **Participants/Sample:** The study population consisted of all teachers working at two leading Madrasah Aliyah in Central Java. The two schools were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) they are leading Madrasah Aliyah with A accreditation; (2) they have a representative number of teaching staff; and (3) they have implemented various leadership development and continuous quality improvement programs. Total sampling was used, given that the entire population was accessible. A total of 110 teachers from the two madrasahs were successfully sampled. All

respondents were active teachers who had served for at least one year at their respective schools, giving them sufficient experience to evaluate the principal's leadership, their own performance, and the school's effectiveness.

• **Instruments:** Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The research instrument consisted of three sections measuring three main variables, with each variable represented by five indicators, each broken down into five statements, for a total of 15 statements.

The Holistic Leadership (X) variable instrument measures: (1) the principal's self-development and integrity; (2) spiritual vision and inspiring values; (3) service orientation toward the school community; (4) the ability to integrate various leadership strategies; and (5) the development of an inclusive school culture. The Teacher Performance (Y1) variable instrument measures: (1) the quality of lesson planning; (2) pedagogical competence and subject matter mastery; (3) participation in professional development; (4) contributions to the learning community; and (5) focus on student achievement. The School Effectiveness (Y2) variable instrument measures: (1) achievement of the school's vision and mission; (2) quality of the learning process and outcomes; (3) school climate and culture; (4) organizational management efficiency; and (5) stakeholder engagement.

• **Data Analysis:** The data were analyzed using simple linear regression techniques with the aid of IBM SPSS Statistics software. Tests were

conducted using two separate models: Model 1 tested the effect of holistic leadership (X) on teacher performance (Y1), and Model 2 tested the effect of holistic leadership (X) on school effectiveness (Y2). Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality and linearity tests. The criteria for hypothesis testing used a significance level (p) < 0.05 and a calculated t-value compared to the table t-value. The strength and direction of the effect were assessed based on the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) and the

coefficient of determination (R-squared) (Dimopoulos, 2020).

4. Results

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Before conducting the hypothesis testing, the following descriptive statistics of the three research variables are presented to provide an overview of the characteristics of the data collected from 110 teacher respondents.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Holistic Leadership (X)	110	15	25	20.09	1,503
Teacher Performance (Y1)	110	18	25	22.17	1.502
School Effectiveness (Y2)	110	18	25	22.01	1.487

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Based on Table 1, the holistic leadership variable (X) has a mean of 20.09 with a standard deviation of 1.503, indicating that, in general, teachers rate the principal's holistic leadership as "fairly good." The teacher performance variable (Y1) has a mean of 22.17 with a standard deviation of 1.502, while school effectiveness (Y2) has a mean of 22.01 with a standard deviation of 1.487. The relatively small standard deviations for all three variables indicate a fairly homogeneous distribution of data among the respondents.

4.2 The Effect of Holistic Leadership on Teacher Performance

The first hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression, with holistic leadership (X) as the predictor and teacher performance (Y1) as the dependent variable. The results of the model summary, ANOVA, and regression coefficients are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 below.

Table 2. The Effect of X on Y1

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.016	,000	-0.009	1.502

a. Predictors: (Constant), Holistic Leadership (X)

Table 2 shows that $R = 0.016$ and $R\text{-squared} = 0.000$, meaning that holistic leadership explains only 0.0% of the variance in teacher performance. The negative Adjusted R-Square value (-0.009)

confirms that this model has no significant predictive power regarding teacher performance. The standard error of estimate of 1.502 indicates a high degree of residual variation that cannot be explained by the holistic leadership variable.

Table 3. Test Effect of X on Y1

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.065	1	.065	.029	,865
Residual	243,653	108	2,256		
Total	243,718	109			

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance (Y1) | b. Predictors: (Constant), Holistic Leadership (X)

The ANOVA test results in Table 3 show an F-value of 0.029 with a significance level of $p = 0.865$ ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that the regression model as a whole is not significant,

meaning that holistic leadership is statistically unable to meaningfully predict teacher performance. The very small value of the Sum of Squares for Regression (0.065) compared to the Residuals (243.653) confirms the dominance of other factors outside the model.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients Effect of X on Y1

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	22.078	1.737		12,714	,000
Holistic Leadership (X)	,013	,078	,016	,170	,865

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance (Y1)

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients for the model examining the effect of holistic leadership on teacher performance. The constant term was found to be $B = 22.078$ ($t = 12.714$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that, even without the influence of holistic leadership, teacher performance is predicted to be 22.078. The regression coefficient for holistic leadership (X) is $B = 0.013$ with a standardized beta of 0.016 and a t-value of 0.170 ($p = 0.865$). Since the p-value of 0.865 is well above the significance threshold

of 0.05, H1 is rejected: holistic leadership does not have a significant effect on teacher performance at Elite Madrasah Aliyah in Central Java.

4.3 The Effect of Holistic Leadership on School Effectiveness

The second hypothesis was tested using the same simple linear regression model, with school effectiveness (Y2) as the dependent variable. The complete results are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5. Effect of X on Y2

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.018	,000	-0.009	1.487

a. Predictors: (Constant), Holistic Leadership (X)

Table 5 shows that $R = 0.018$ and R-squared = 0.000, indicating that holistic leadership explains almost none of the variance in school effectiveness. The negative Adjusted R-Square

value (-0.009) further confirms that the model has no predictive power regarding school effectiveness. This pattern is consistent with the findings in Model 1 (the effect on teacher performance).

Table 6. Test Effect of X on Y2

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.076	1	.076	,035	,853
Residual	238,842	108	2,211		
Total	238,918	109			

a. Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness (Y2) | b. Predictors: (Constant), Holistic Leadership (X)

The results of the ANOVA test in Table 6 show an F value of 0.035 with a p-value of 0.853 ($p > 0.05$). The regression model as a whole is not significant, meaning that holistic leadership is not

capable of predicting school effectiveness in a statistically significant way. The Sum of Squares for Regression () is very small (0.076) compared to the Residuals (238.842), further confirming that the variation in school effectiveness is largely explained by other factors not included in this model.

Table 7. Regression Coefficients Effect of X on Y2

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	22.346	1.719		12,997	,000
Holistic Leadership (X)	-,014	,078	-,018	-0.186	,853

a. Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness (Y2)

Table 7 shows a significant constant $B = 22.346$ ($t = 12.997$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that, without the contribution of holistic leadership, school effectiveness is predicted to be 22.346. The regression coefficient for holistic leadership is $B = -0.014$ with a standardized beta of -0.018 and a t-value of -0.186 ($p = 0.853$). The negative direction of the coefficient, although not statistically significant, indicates a slight negative

trend that is not statistically significant. Thus, H2 is rejected: holistic leadership does not have a significant effect on school effectiveness at Madrasah Aliyah Unggulan in Central Java.

4.4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 8 summarizes the results of testing the two research hypotheses to provide a comprehensive overview and facilitate comparison between the two regression models.

Table 8. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t-calculation	Sig.	Notes
H1	$X \rightarrow Y1$	.016	.170	,865	Not Significant
H2	$X \rightarrow Y2$	-0.018	-0.186	,853	Not Significant

Note: * Significant at $p < 0.05$. Source: Processed primary data (2024)

Based on Table 8, it can be concluded that both research hypotheses are rejected. The principal's holistic leadership does not have a significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.016$; $p = 0.865 > 0.05$) or on school effectiveness ($\beta = -0.018$; $p = 0.853 > 0.05$). These findings are consistent

across both models and imply the need for further investigation into the factors that actually mediate or moderate the relationship between

holistic leadership and teacher performance and school effectiveness.

5. Discussion

Holistic Leadership and Teacher Performance

The results of the H1 test indicate that the principal's holistic leadership does not have a significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.016$; $t = 0.170$; $p = 0.865$). This finding differs from most of the literature, which reports a positive influence of various leadership dimensions on teacher performance. Heenan et al. (2023), in a systematic review of 15 international studies, found that transformational leadership as one component of holistic leadership is strongly correlated with increased teacher motivation and a more positive school culture. Panagopoulos et al. (2023) also reported a very strong correlation between transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction ($r = 0.785$; $p < 0.001$) in Greek elementary schools. These differences suggest that the relationship between holistic leadership and teacher performance is contextual and cannot be directly generalized.

Several explanations can be offered to interpret these non-significant results. First, holistic leadership, as defined by Marlina (Marlina, 2022), emphasizes the internal dimensions of a leader's self-development (Self, Spirit, Service), whose influence on teacher performance may be indirect and mediated by intermediary variables such as school climate, organizational trust, or teachers' intrinsic motivation. Tan et al. (2020) points out that the effects of school leadership are highly dependent on cultural context and values, such that the application of the same leadership model can produce different effects in different contexts. Second, Marlina herself (Marlina, 2022) notes that the holistic leadership model is not yet familiar in many Islamic educational institutions, so its implementation may still be in the early stages and has not yet been optimally manifested in changes in teacher performance. Third, there is a possibility of a ceiling effect on the teacher performance variable, where the average teacher performance is already relatively high (22.17 out

of a maximum of 25), so the range of variation that can be explained by holistic leadership is very limited (Pan & Chen, 2021).

These findings are consistent with several studies that also report the influence of indirect or conditional leadership. Reenen & Triegaardt (2024) found that transformational leadership fosters connectedness, empathy, and engagement among school staff, but these effects are more a matter of a medium-term mediating process than a direct influence on performance. Sofian (2023) confirms that supportive leadership enhances educator engagement, though its impact on concrete performance requires time and supportive organizational conditions. Meanwhile, Farley's (2024) research indicates that shared leadership enhances teaching morale and academic professionalism, with the caveat that these effects are more pronounced when a culture of shared leadership is deeply embedded in the school's culture a condition that may not yet be fully realized in the two madrasahs studied.

5.2 Holistic Leadership and School Effectiveness

Testing H2 yielded similar results: holistic leadership did not have a significant effect on school effectiveness ($\beta = -0.018$; $t = -0.186$; $p = 0.853$). The slightly negative direction of the coefficient, although not statistically significant, is an interesting finding and warrants further examination. Dimopoulos (2020) argues that globally recognized attributes of school efficiency such as a shared vision, mission, and goal achievement are the products of effective school leadership. However, Acera et al. (2023), who found a significant relationship between leadership and school effectiveness, used a more comprehensive study design that controlled for mediating variables a step not taken in this study.

A relevant theoretical perspective for explaining these findings is the argument by Mincu et al. (2024) that successful school principals integrate various leadership approaches in a layered and targeted manner rather than simply applying a single, monolithic model. This suggests that school effectiveness is not directly influenced solely by a holistic leadership orientation, but

rather by how that orientation is implemented through structured and diverse leadership practices. A study by Dan et al. (2022), using PISA data from Germany and China, confirms that the relationship between leadership and student achievement is highly dependent on context and leader characteristics, meaning that no single leadership style is universally superior. Asobee and Gemechu (2022), in their phenomenological study, identified nine main themes of holistic leadership experiences encompassing value-based, relational, and transformative dimensions demonstrating that the impact of holistic leadership is complex, multidimensional, and not easily captured through a single simple linear measure.

Possible mediating and moderating factors include: teachers' trust in the principal (Ismail et al., 2021), the level of teacher autonomy (Hsieh et al., 2025), the quality of the principal's thinking system (Nadav et al., 2023), and teachers' demographic characteristics (Torres Clark & Chrispeels, 2022). Tan et al. (2020) found that the patterns of the relationship between leadership and student learning outcomes differed significantly based on the availability of school resources and socioeconomic status factors not controlled for in this study. Gupta (2025) emphasizes that leadership cannot be separated from its sociocultural and institutional context, and in madrasahs that prioritize Islamic values, the spiritual dimension of leadership may require more nuanced and qualitative measurement. The findings from both hypotheses collectively answer the research question with the conclusion that, in the context of two elite Madrasah Aliyah in Central Java, holistic leadership as directly measured through teachers' perceptions does not automatically result in significant changes in teacher performance or school effectiveness. This does not mean that holistic leadership is irrelevant; rather, it indicates that its influence is more likely to be indirect, mediated, or moderated by contextual variables that need to be investigated in future research with a more comprehensive design (O'Sullivan & Mac Ruairc, 2025).

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the principal's holistic leadership does not have a significant effect on teacher performance (H1 rejected: $\beta = 0.016$; $p = 0.865$) or on school effectiveness (H2 rejected: $\beta = -0.018$; $p = 0.853$) at elite Madrasah Aliyah schools in Central Java. Both regression models explain nearly zero percent of the variance in the dependent variables, indicating that holistic leadership, when measured singly and directly, is insufficient to predict teacher performance and school effectiveness. These findings highlight the need to explore mediating and moderating variables such as organizational climate, teacher trust, professional autonomy, and school characteristics that may bridge the relationship between holistic leadership and organizational outcomes in the madrasah context. The practical implication is that the development of holistic leadership among madrasah principals needs to be integrated with more comprehensive organizational capacity-building programs, including improvements to the quality management system, the development of a culture of professional learning, and the strengthening of collaboration among principals, teachers, and stakeholders. Policies for madrasah principal development should not only focus on fostering a personal holistic orientation but also ensure that this orientation is transformed into structured, measurable leadership practices that are responsive to the contextual needs of the madrasah. This study has the following limitations: (1) the sample was limited to two madrasahs, so the generalizability of the findings must be carefully considered; (2) the cross-sectional design does not allow for strong causal inferences; (3) the measurement of holistic leadership relies solely on teachers' perceptions without incorporating observational data; and (4) the exclusion of theoretically relevant mediator and moderator variables. Further research is recommended to use a longitudinal design with a broader sample scope, integrate mediator variables, and consider mixed-methods approaches to capture the nuances of holistic leadership, which is multidimensional and contextual in nature.

7. References

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10. Author Declaration

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest and that this study is an original study conducted by the author.