

The Influence Of Transformational Leadership, Psychological Well-Being, And Work Stress On The Work Ethic Of Elementary School Teachers

Lia Maulia, Sutarto Hadi, Sulistiyana Sulistiyana

Universitas Lambung Mangkurat

Jl. Brigjen H. Hasan Basri, Banjarmasin, Kalimantan, Indonesia

Correspondence: maulia364@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effects of transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and job stress on the work ethic of elementary school teachers. Teachers' work ethic plays a crucial role in improving the quality of basic education, particularly in semi-rural areas characterized by limited resources and complex work dynamics. This research employed a quantitative approach using a path analysis design. The research population consisted of all elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency, with a total sample of 101 teachers selected through a total sampling technique. Data were collected using standardized Likert-scale questionnaires that had been tested for validity and reliability. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results indicate that transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and job stress simultaneously have a significant effect on teachers' work ethic. Partially, psychological well-being was found to be the most dominant factor in enhancing teachers' work ethic, while job stress had a significant negative effect. Furthermore, transformational leadership not only exerts a direct influence on teachers' work ethic but also indirectly strengthens it through the improvement of teachers' psychological well-being.

In conclusion, the findings emphasize that strengthening teachers' work ethic is more effectively achieved through a humanistic leadership approach that prioritizes psychological well-being, rather than relying solely on strategies aimed at reducing work-related stress.

Keywords: transformational leadership; psychological well-being; work stress; teachers' work ethic

Improving the quality of basic education in Indonesia is highly dependent on the strategic role of teachers as the main actors in the learning process. A teacher's work ethic is one of the main determinants of educational success, because it reflects the teacher's discipline, responsibility, professional commitment, and dedication in carrying out their duties. However, facts on the ground show that the work ethic of teachers in a number of areas, including in Bungur District, Tapin Regency, is still not optimal. Data from the Tapin Regency Education Office (2023) recorded a teacher absenteeism rate of 12%, higher than the district average of only 8%. This condition is exacerbated by low literacy and numeracy achievements based on the 2022 National Assessment, which shows that the quality of learning in the region is not fully as expected. This indicates that the issue of teachers' work ethic is still a significant challenge and urgent to be studied more deeply. As revealed in a study, teachers' work

ethic has a significant influence on teacher performance and also through motivation to excel (Patmawati, et al., 2025). Another study found that work ethic directly affects teacher performance (Rasidinorahmat, et al., 2022).

Various previous studies have shown that teachers' work ethic does not stand alone, but is influenced by transformational leadership factors, psychological well-being, and work pressure or stress. The results of a study show that the transformational leadership style of school principals contributes significantly to teachers' professional attitudes, both directly and through job satisfaction and achievement motivation (Hilal, et al., 2021). Transformational leadership of school principals is able to build a positive work culture and encourage the professional spirit of teachers (Aslamiah, et al., 2022). Another study found that there was a positive correlation between transformational leadership, work discipline, and work motivation with teacher performance (Kii, et al., 2024). Although a number of studies have examined the influence of each of these variables on teacher performance or work ethic, most of them have been conducted in the context of urban or regional schools with better access to resources. There have not been many studies that have simultaneously examined the relationship between these three variables in an integrated manner in the context of semi-rural areas such as Bungur District, which have different geographical characteristics and field challenges.

Based on these gaps, this study has novelty in analyzing the influence of transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and work stress simultaneously on the work ethic of elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency. This study not only captures the direct influence, but also takes into account the systemic contributions of psychological factors and work pressure that may be reinforcing or inhibiting teachers' work ethic in the context of primary education in non-urban areas. Based on this description, the research problems in this article are: how does transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and work stress affect the work ethic of elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency?. The purpose of this study is to empirically analyze the influence of transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and work stress on the work ethic of elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a path analysis design because it aims to analyze the direct and indirect influence of transformational leadership variables, psychological well-being, and work stress on teachers' work ethic. This approach was chosen so that the structural relationships between variables can be tested simultaneously and comprehensively. The subjects of the study are all public elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency, which totals 101 teachers based on Dapodik data in 2025. Because the population is < 150, this study uses a total sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2013), so that the entire population is sampled. The allocation per school still pays attention to the proportionality of the number of teachers so that it is representative of field conditions. The research instrument was in the form of a standardized questionnaire using a Likert scale of 1–5 adapted from the theories of Bass & Avolio (transformational leadership), Ryff (psychological well-being), Cooper et al. (work stress), and Etzioni (work ethic).

Each instrument has gone through a content validity test through expert judgment before disseminating it to respondents. The empirical validity test was performed using item–total correlation with an $r >$ limit of 0.30,

while the reliability test used Cronbach's Alpha, and all variables showed a value of > 0.70 that met the high reliability criteria. Data collection was carried out directly through the distribution of structured questionnaires to all teachers with the coordination of the principal. Each respondent was given an explanation regarding the purpose of the research and the guarantee of data confidentiality. The filling process is carried out independently and collected on the same day to avoid perception bias and social response. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25. The initial stage of analysis begins with descriptive statistics to illustrate the score distribution of each variable. Furthermore, prerequisite tests were carried out including normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov), linearity tests, and multicollinearity tests to ensure the fulfillment of the assumptions of path analysis (Ghozali, 2011). Path analysis is used to test the direct and indirect influence of each independent variable on the bound variable, as well as determine the significant mediating variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Prerequisite Test Results

Before conducting regression analysis and path analysis, the study first conducted a series of pre-requisite tests to ensure that the data used met the necessary statistical assumptions. The normality test showed that the residual data had a significance value above 0.05, which means that the data was distributed normally and was feasible to analyze using a parametric approach. The linearity test also showed a linear relationship between the variables of transformational leadership, *psychological well-being*, work stress, and work ethic. This is important because regression and path analysis can only be performed if the relationships between variables are linear.

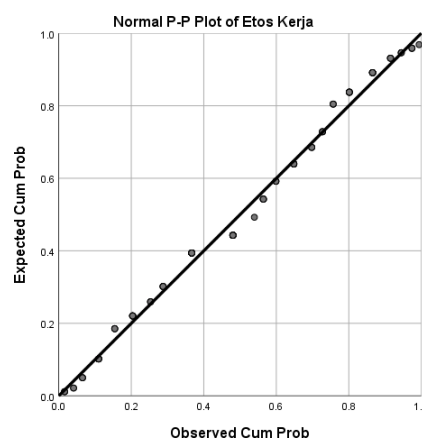


Figure 1. Normality Test Graph

Source: Author's Research Data

Furthermore, the multicollinearity test showed that all independent variables had a Tolerance value greater than 0.10 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of less than 10. This condition indicates that there is no very high correlation between independent variables, so there is no problem of multicollinearity. Thus, each independent variable is considered to stand alone and exert a pure influence on the dependent variable without interfering with each other. Overall, the results of this pre-requisite test provide a solid basis that the data obtained meet all eligibility criteria to proceed to the regression analysis and path analysis stages. This ensures that the results of the hypothesis test obtained later are valid and can be scientifically accounted for.

Hypothesis Test Results

The hypothesis testing analysis in this study was carried out through a regression model consisting of three main models. In the first model, it was found that transformational leadership, *psychological well-being*, and work stress simultaneously had a significant influence on teachers' work ethic. The determination coefficient value obtained showed that more than 75 percent of the variation in teachers' work ethic could be explained by these three variables, while the rest was influenced by other factors outside of this study. Partially, transformational leadership has a positive influence on work ethic, although its contribution is relatively smaller than that of *psychological well-being*. *Psychological well-being* has proven to be the most dominant factor that significantly improves teachers' work ethic. On the other hand, work stress has a negative and significant influence on work ethic, which means that the higher the teacher's stress level, the lower their motivation and professional responsibility. In the second model, transformational leadership was proven to have a positive and significant effect on *teachers' psychological well-being*. This shows that school principals who are able to provide inspiration, motivation, and emotional support will be able to improve the psychological well-being of teachers. Meanwhile, the third model shows that transformational leadership has a negative and significant influence on work stress. This means that the better the quality of the principal's leadership, the lower the level of work stress experienced by teachers. These findings also confirm that supportive leadership is able to create a healthy and productive work climate.

Path Analysis

Path analysis was carried out to determine the direct and indirect relationship between variables, especially how the transformational leadership of the principal can affect the teacher's work ethic through *psychological well-being* and work stress as a mediating variable. The results of the analysis show that the direct influence of transformational leadership on work ethic is positive and significant, although the value is not as great as the indirect influence. The indirect path through *psychological well-being* has a stronger influence than the path through work stress. This means that transformational leadership is more effective in improving teachers' work ethic if they are able to build psychological well-being in a positive way. Conversely, although work stress also plays a role as a mediating variable, the effect is relatively small compared to *psychological well-being*. This shows that teachers tend to be more responsive to forms of leadership that support, motivate, and appreciate their psychological qualities, rather than just working pressure conditions. Comprehensively, these results prove that transformational leadership is not only directly influential, but more powerful through the internal psychological processes of teachers. Thus, this study emphasizes that improving teachers' work ethic will be more effective if it is done through strengthening positive psychological conditions, not solely through reducing workload or work pressure.

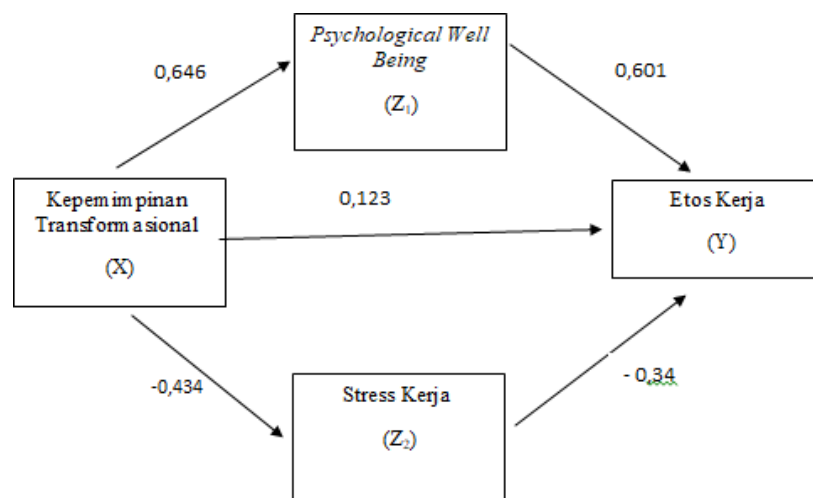


Figure 2. Path Analysis Regression Test Results

Source: Author's Research Data

DISCUSSION

The discussion in this chapter describes in depth the findings of research on the influence of transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and work stress on the work ethic of elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency. The discussion is arranged based on the order of hypotheses and research findings.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teachers' Work Ethic

The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on the work ethic of elementary school teachers in Bungur District. These findings indicate that a principal's visionary, inspirational, and individual development-oriented leadership style is able to encourage teachers to demonstrate higher dedication, responsibility, and work commitment.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the concept of transformational leadership put forward by Bass and Avolio (1994), which emphasizes that transformational leaders are able to generate intrinsic motivation through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the context of education, this kind of leadership not only directs the work behavior of teachers, but also shapes the value and meaning of work as a form of professional service.

The findings of this study reinforce the results of previous research by Fadhilah et al. (2020), Fairy et al. (2019), and Diannita (2021) who stated that transformational leadership contributes significantly to improving teachers' work ethic. In fact, Norlatifah et al. (2024) and Hafizi et al. (2025) show that the influence of transformational leadership is getting stronger in the context of educational institutions facing change and limited resources.

In the context of Bungur District, which has semi-rural characteristics, transformational leadership is becoming increasingly relevant because the principal plays the role of a central figure who is able to replace structural limitations with relational and psychological strength. Thus, transformational leadership not only functions as a managerial instrument, but also as a mechanism for strengthening teachers' work ethic in a sustainable manner.

The Influence of Psychological Well-Being on Teachers' Work Ethic

The results of the study show that psychological well-being has a positive and significant influence on teachers' work ethic, and is the most dominant variable. These findings confirm that teachers' work ethic is not solely shaped by structural or leadership factors, but is strongly influenced by the condition of individual psychological well-being.

According to Ryff (1989), psychological well-being includes the dimensions of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, mastery of the environment, life goals, and self-development. Teachers

who have high psychological well-being tend to have a meaningful work orientation, resistance to pressure, and strong intrinsic motivation. This condition allows teachers to continue to show a high work ethic even in challenging work situations.

The findings of this study are consistent with the research results of Apriliawati (2022), Fadhila et al. (2025), and Anisah (2023) which show that psychological well-being plays a significant role in shaping work ethic and teacher performance. In addition, Hairudinor (2021) emphasized that psychological well-being functions as a psychological mechanism that connects leadership with positive work behavior.

In the context of Bungur District, where teachers are faced with administrative workloads, limited facilities, and demands for curriculum adaptation, psychological well-being is a very important protective factor. Teachers with good psychological well-being are able to interpret their work positively, so that they still show a high work ethic even though they are in limitations.

The Effect of Work Stress on Teachers' Work Ethic

The results of the study show that work stress has a negative and significant effect on teachers' work ethic. These findings indicate that increased work pressure, whether administrative, emotional, and performance demands, has the potential to reduce teachers' enthusiasm, discipline, and work commitment.

Theoretically, Cooper and Marshall (1976) explain that unmanaged work stress will reduce the individual's capacity to perform professional roles optimally. Maslach and Leiter (2016) add that chronic work stress can trigger emotional fatigue and depersonalization, which ultimately lowers work ethic.

These findings are in line with research by Firdaus (2023), Lengkong et al. (2025), and Ma'wa et al. (2024) which show that work stress has a negative relationship with work ethic and teacher professionalism. Ritonga (2025) even found that work stress is negatively correlated with psychological well-being, which indirectly impacts teachers' work behavior.

In the context of Bungur, high administrative demands and limited organizational support magnify the potential for work stress. Therefore, work stress management is an important aspect in efforts to maintain and improve teachers' work ethic.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teachers' Psychological Well-Being

The results of the study show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on psychological well-being. This means that school principals who are able to provide support, inspiration, and individual attention can improve the psychological well-being of teachers.

These findings are consistent with the view of Bass & Riggio (2006) and Avolio & Gardner (2005) that transformational leaders are able to improve the psychological well-being of subordinates through emotional support and intrinsic motivation. Teachers who feel valued and given space to develop will have a better mental state and be better prepared to face the demands of work.

In the context of Bungur District, where teachers work with various pressures and limitations, the role of the principal is very crucial in creating a supportive work climate.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Work Stress

Research also shows that transformational leadership has a negative effect on teachers' work stress. Inspirational and supportive leadership can reduce the work pressure felt by teachers.

The study of Skakon et al. (2010) as well as recent research by Patel & Suresh (2022) confirm that leadership that provides emotional support and empowerment can reduce subordinate work stress. Principals who apply transformational values are able to provide a sense of psychological security and reduce teachers' anxiety about job demands.

Indirect Influence of Transformational Leadership on Work Ethic through Psychological Well-Being

The results of the pathway analysis show that psychological well-being is an important mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and work ethic. This means transformational leadership not only has a direct effect, but also strengthens teachers' work ethic by improving their psychological well-being.

With increased psychological well-being, teachers become more confident, more motivated, feel more valued, and ultimately show a higher work ethic.

Indirect Influence of Transformational Leadership on Work Ethic through Work Stress

Transformational leadership has also been shown to have an indirect effect on work ethic through reducing work stress. When the principal is able to reduce the teacher's work pressure, it is easier for the teacher to show a good work ethic.

This reinforces the view of Danna & Griffin (1999) that stress management is a key aspect in creating positive work behaviors. Teachers who are free from excessive stress are better able to show dedication, discipline, and high commitment in carrying out their duties.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the work ethic of elementary school teachers in Bungur District, Tapin Regency was significantly influenced by transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and work stress. Transformational leadership has been shown to enhance teachers' work ethic through leadership behaviors that inspire, foster, and provide individualized support. Psychological well-being is the most dominant factor in shaping work ethic, where teachers with a good level of psychological well-being are better able to show commitment, discipline, and responsibility in carrying out tasks. On the other hand, work stress has a negative effect on work ethic, so the higher the work pressure experienced by teachers, the lower the work ethic shown. In addition, transformational leadership contributes to increasing psychological well-being and decreasing work stress, so that it directly or indirectly affects teachers' work ethic. Simultaneously, the three

independent variables contributed 79.6%, which shows that teachers' work ethic is influenced by psychological conditions, work pressure, and leadership quality in schools.

SUGGESTIONS

This study provides an overview of the influence of transformational leadership, psychological well-being, and work stress on teachers' work ethic, but there is still room for further development by future researchers. Therefore, it is recommended that subsequent research expand the scope of variables, either by adding other variables such as organizational culture, achievement motivation, job satisfaction, or burnout, or by using different methodological approaches, such as mixed methods or qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding. Researchers are also advised to expand the research area so that the results can be compared between regions and make a more comprehensive contribution to the development of educational administration science. In addition, increased sample sizes, more diverse use of instruments, and analysis of more complex structural models can help complement the findings of this study and provide a broader understanding of the factors that influence teachers' work ethic in various educational contexts.

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