

# The Influence of Principal Leadership Style and Professional Competence on Teachers' Teaching Skills in Tomohon City

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher quality is a cornerstone of educational excellence, and teaching skill, the practical ability to plan, implement, manage, and evaluate learning effectively, remains a critical yet underexplored outcome variable in Indonesian school management research. Empirical evidence consistently highlights that both school leadership and teacher professional competence are key determinants of instructional quality, yet their combined influence on teaching skills has received limited quantitative investigation, particularly in the North Sulawesi regional context. This study aimed to examine the influence of principal leadership style and professional competence, both individually and simultaneously, on teachers' teaching skills in senior high schools in Tomohon City. This research used a quantitative research design, with simple and multiple regression analysis was employed. A proportionate stratified random sample of 106 teachers was drawn from a population of 145 teachers across five senior high schools in Tomohon City. Data were collected using validated Likert-scale questionnaires (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ : 0.942, 0.812, and 0.885 for teaching skill, leadership style, and professional competence, respectively) and analyzed using SPSS version 25. The results of this research are that principal leadership style significantly influenced teaching skills ( $r = 0.597$ ;  $R^2 = 0.356$ ;  $F = 57.458$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 35.6% of the variance. Professional competence demonstrated a stronger individual effect ( $r = 0.660$ ;  $R^2 = 0.435$ ;  $F = 80.054$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), accounting for 43.5% of the variance. When both predictors were included simultaneously in a multiple regression model, they jointly explained 50.8% of the variance in teaching skills ( $R = 0.713$ ;  $R^2 = 0.508$ ;  $F = 53.211$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with the regression equation  $\hat{Y} = 6.468 + 0.293(X_1) + 0.536(X_2)$ . This study concluded that both principal leadership style and teacher professional competence are significant and positive predictors of teaching skills, with the combined model providing the strongest explanatory power. This study implies that

school policymakers and principals should adopt a synergistic approach that simultaneously strengthens adaptive leadership practices and invests in continuous professional competence development programs to optimally enhance classroom teaching quality.

**Keywords:** educational management, Indonesia principal leadership style, professional competence, teaching skills.

## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is fundamentally shaped by the quality of instruction that occurs in the classroom. Teaching skill, defined as the practical, demonstrated ability of a teacher to plan, execute, manage, and evaluate learning experiences effectively and professionally, constitutes the operational core of instructional quality (Mulyasa, 2021; Uno, 2020). While educational researchers have extensively examined variables such as teacher performance and professional identity, the specific construct of teaching skill as a measurable outcome in the context of organizational and individual antecedents remains less systematically explored in Indonesian secondary education.

Two factors are theoretically and empirically linked to the development of teaching skill: the leadership style of the school principal, and the professional competence of the teacher. School principals function not merely as administrative managers but as pedagogical leaders who shape school culture, inspire professional growth, and direct instructional policies (Wahjosumidjo, 2017; Mulyasa, 2021). Concurrently, professional competence, the mastery of subject matter, curriculum, and pedagogical methodology, provides the knowledge foundation from which teaching skill is derived and enacted (Uno & Lamatenggo, 2020; Mansyur & Sumarni, 2024).

Observational evidence from senior high schools in Tomohon City, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, reveals practical deficits in both domains. Teachers frequently rely on lecture-based methods with insufficient variation, classroom management remains inconsistent, and principals' leadership communications often lack specificity during curriculum transitions. These observations point to a systemic need for empirical investigation of the relationship between leadership, competence, and teaching skill within this regional context.

Substantial prior literature supports the role of school leadership in improving teacher outcomes. Wote and Patalatu (2019) documented positive effects of transformational leadership on teacher performance at the elementary school level in Tobelo Tengah, while Suryati, Nur, and Sianturi (2023) confirmed that transformational principals inspire teacher creativity and commitment in senior high school settings. At the policy level, Andriadi and Sulistiyo (2024) demonstrated that both instructional and transformational leadership styles exert a significant influence on teacher work motivation and satisfaction, which indirectly enhances instructional quality.

Concerning professional competence, Hildayati (2024) established a significantly positive relationship between principal instructional leadership, school climate, work motivation, and teacher professionalism using path analysis. Nurhayati and Samsudin (2021) further confirmed that professional competence is the strongest single predictor of teaching skill quality. Afridawati (2019) examined the combined effects of principal leadership style and teacher competence on teacher performance at

SMKN 1 Jiwan, finding effect sizes of 4.2% and 9.1%, respectively, considerably more modest than the present study's findings.

Taken together, prior studies tend to focus either on leadership or competence in isolation, use teacher performance or professionalism as the outcome variable, or rely on path analysis rather than multiple regression. Few studies simultaneously examine the combined direct influence of leadership style and professional competence on the specific construct of teaching skill within the Indonesian senior high school context using regression methodology.

The primary research gap addressed by this study is the absence of quantitative evidence regarding the simultaneous influence of principal leadership style and teacher professional competence on teaching skill as a distinct and practically significant construct. While Afridawati (2019) examined a related model, the operationalization of the outcome as teaching skill (rather than general performance), the use of a proportionate stratified sampling design across multiple school types, and the substantially larger effect sizes obtained represent meaningful scholarly advances. The novelty of this research lies in: (1) contextualizing both independent variables within a multi-school, multi-sector environment (public and private senior high schools in Tomohon City); (2) employing Usman's (2010) eight-component framework of teaching skill as the dependent construct; and (3) generating regression coefficients that allow for precise practical recommendations to school administrators.

This study investigated: (1) whether principal leadership style significantly influences teachers' teaching skills; (2) whether professional competence significantly influences teachers' teaching skills; and (3) whether principal leadership style and professional competence simultaneously and significantly influence teachers' teaching skills in Tomohon City.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Teaching Skills

Teaching skill is defined as the set of specific instructional behaviors that a teacher must demonstrate to facilitate effective, efficient, and professional learning (Mulyasa, 2021). Arikunto (2020) conceptualizes it as the practical manifestation of teacher competence in classroom instruction, encompassing lesson planning, material delivery, classroom management, student guidance, and learning evaluation. According to Usman (2010), eight foundational teaching skills are essential: questioning, reinforcing, employing variation, explaining, opening and closing lessons, guiding small-group discussions, classroom management, and individualized instruction. These skills collectively determine the quality of the teaching-learning process and serve as observable indicators of instructional effectiveness.

### Principal Leadership Style

Leadership style refers to the behavioral norms and strategic patterns that a leader consistently employs when influencing others (Thoha, 2013). In the school context, principal leadership encompasses the ability to direct, guide, and facilitate all school members toward the attainment of educational goals (Mulyasa, 2021). Indicators used in this study, adapted from Wahjosumidjo in Mulyasa (2013), include personality, professional knowledge, understanding of the school's vision and

mission, decision-making ability, and communication effectiveness. Research confirms that principals who actively provide instructional guidance, communicate expectations clearly, and cultivate a professionally supportive environment contribute meaningfully to teacher skill development (Fitriani, 2024).

### **Professional Competence**

Professional competence refers to the teacher's mastery of subject matter and curriculum, as well as the capacity to translate that knowledge into pedagogical practice (Mansyur & Sumarni, 2024). Usman (2011) identifies five indicators: mastery of subject content, management of learning programs, classroom management, use of instructional media and learning resources, and understanding of educational foundations. Continuous professional development, teaching experience, institutional support, and digital literacy are recognized as key enabling factors (Sari & Herman, 2021; Fitriani & Mardina, 2025). Professional competence provides the knowledge scaffolding necessary for teaching skill to be enacted effectively in the classroom.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative correlational-causal research design, utilizing simple and multiple regression analysis. The method was selected because the research objective required determination of functional and directional relationships between two independent variables (principal leadership style and professional competence) and one dependent variable (teaching skill).

### **Population and Sample**

The target population comprised all teachers in senior high schools (SMA) within Tomohon City, totaling 145 teachers across five institutions: SMA Negeri 1 Tomohon ( $n = 55$ ), SMA Negeri 2 Tomohon ( $n = 18$ ), SMA Kristen 1 Tomohon ( $n = 35$ ), SMA Kristen 2 Tomohon ( $n = 18$ ), and SMA Katolik Karitas Tomohon ( $n = 19$ ). The final sample of 106 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula at a 5% precision level ( $e = 0.05$ ), and sampling was conducted using proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation from each school.

### **Instrumentation**

Three Likert-scale questionnaires (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), each comprising 10 items, were administered to measure: (Y) teaching skill, adapted from Usman (2010), covering lesson opening and closing, instructional variation, questioning, and explaining skills; ( $X_1$ ) principal leadership style, adapted from Mulyasa (2013), covering personality, knowledge, vision/mission understanding, decision-making, and communication; and ( $X_2$ ) professional competence, adapted from Usman (2011), covering subject mastery, learning program management, classroom management, instructional media use, educational foundations, and continuing professional development.

Content validity was assessed through Pearson product-moment correlation against  $r$ -table = 0.361 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ;  $n = 28$ ), with all 30 items confirmed valid. Internal consistency reliability was tested

using Cronbach's alpha, yielding  $\alpha = 0.942$  (teaching skill),  $\alpha = 0.812$  (leadership style), and  $\alpha = 0.885$  (professional competence), all well above the threshold of 0.60 (Sugiyono, 2019).

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Assumption testing included the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality (residuals sig. = 0.200 > 0.05; data normally distributed), the ANOVA table Deviation from Linearity test for linearity ( $X_1Y$ : sig. = 0.158;  $X_2Y$ : sig. = 0.229; both > 0.05, confirming linear relationships), and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for multicollinearity (VIF = 1.472 for both predictors; < 10, confirming absence of multicollinearity). Hypotheses were tested using simple regression (H1, H2) and multiple regression (H3) at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics revealed that principal leadership style ( $X_1$ ) had a mean of 41.08 (SD = 7.93; range 17–50), professional competence ( $X_2$ ) had a mean of 42.73 (SD = 6.26; range 21–50), and teaching skill (Y) had a mean of 41.43 (SD = 7.09; range 19–50). All variables yielded mean scores above the midpoint of the 50-point scale, suggesting that respondents generally rated conditions positively, albeit with room for improvement, particularly in teaching skill.

### Hypothesis 1: Effect of Principal Leadership Style on Teaching Skill

Simple regression analysis yielded the equation  $\hat{Y} = 19.543 + 0.533(X_1)$ . The ANOVA test confirmed the model's significance ( $F = 57.458$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and the regression coefficient  $b = 0.533$  was statistically significant ( $t = 7.580$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient  $r = 0.597$  indicated a moderate-to-strong positive relationship, with a coefficient of determination  $R^2 = 0.356$ , meaning that 35.6% of the variance in teaching skill was explained by principal leadership style. H1 was accepted: principal leadership style has a significant positive effect on teaching skill.

### Hypothesis 2: Effect of Professional Competence on Teaching Skill

Simple regression analysis yielded the equation  $\hat{Y} = 9.516 + 0.747(X_2)$ . The ANOVA test confirmed significance ( $F = 80.054$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and the regression coefficient  $b = 0.747$  was statistically significant ( $t = 8.947$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient  $r = 0.660$  indicated a stronger positive relationship compared to H1, with  $R^2 = 0.435$ , indicating that 43.5% of the variance in teaching skill was explained by professional competence alone. H2 was accepted: professional competence has a significant positive effect on teaching skill.

### Hypothesis 3: Simultaneous Effect on Teaching Skill

Multiple regression analysis yielded the equation  $\hat{Y} = 6.468 + 0.293(X_1) + 0.536(X_2)$ . Both predictors remained individually significant in the joint model ( $\beta_1 = 0.328$ ,  $t = 3.916$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\beta_2 = 0.474$ ,  $t = 5.648$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The overall model was highly significant ( $F = 53.211$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with a multiple correlation  $R = 0.713$  and  $R^2 = 0.508$ . Jointly, principal leadership style and professional competence explained 50.8% of the variance in teaching skill. H3 was accepted: both variables simultaneously and significantly influence teaching skill. See table 1.

**Table 1.** Summary of Regression Analysis Results

Model	r	R <sup>2</sup>	F	β / b	t / F	Sig.
H1: Leadership → Teaching Skill	0.597	0.356	57.458	0.533	7.580	<0.001
H2: Competence → Teaching Skill	0.660	0.435	80.054	0.747	8.947	<0.001
H3: Leadership + Competence → Teaching Skill	0.713	0.508	53.211	β <sub>1</sub> =0.328, β <sub>2</sub> =0.474	F=53.211	<0.001

### Principal Leadership Style and Teaching Skill

The finding that principal leadership style significantly and positively influences teachers' teaching skills ( $r = 0.597$ ;  $R^2 = 0.356$ ) is consistent with and extends the existing literature. The present result corroborates the findings of Andriadi and Sulistiyo (2024), who confirmed a significant positive effect of principal leadership on instructional outcomes across multiple leadership style configurations. Similarly, Wote and Patalatu (2019) found that transformational leadership positively affected teacher performance at the elementary level, and Suryati et al. (2023) documented that transformational principals enhance teacher motivation and instructional commitment at the senior high school level.

Notably, the  $R^2$  value of 0.356 in the current study is considerably larger than the 4.2% variance explained by principal leadership style in Afridawati's (2019) study, which examined teacher performance as the outcome. This divergence suggests that teaching skill—as a more behaviorally specific construct—is more directly and strongly shaped by leadership behavior than general teacher performance ratings, which may be influenced by a broader range of contextual and administrative factors. The regression coefficient  $b = 0.533$  indicates that for every one-unit improvement in principal leadership quality, teaching skill increases by 0.533 units, underscoring the practical significance of investing in principal development.

### Professional Competence and Teaching Skill

Professional competence demonstrated the strongest individual predictor effect on teaching skill ( $r = 0.660$ ;  $R^2 = 0.435$ ), accounting for 43.5% of the variance. This finding is in close alignment with

Hildayati (2024), whose study affirmed a significantly positive relationship between teacher professionalism and instructional outcomes. Nurhayati and Samsudin (2021) similarly identified professional competence as the dominant predictor of teaching skill quality in secondary schools, providing direct corroboration of the present result.

In comparison to Afridawati's (2019) finding that teacher competence explained only 9.1% of variance in teacher performance, the current study's  $R^2$  of 43.5% points to the greater predictive sensitivity of teaching skill as an outcome variable. The regression coefficient  $b = 0.747$  further confirms that professional competence is a potent driver: each unit increment in competence yields a 0.747-unit increase in teaching skill. This aligns with the theoretical position of Madjid (2019) and Uno and Lamatenggo (2020), who argue that professional knowledge must be translated into observable instructional behaviors—precisely the kind measured by teaching skill indicators. The higher beta for professional competence ( $\beta = 0.474$ ) compared to leadership style ( $\beta = 0.328$ ) in the combined model suggests that internal teacher capabilities are more proximal determinants of teaching skill than external leadership behavior.

### **Combined Effect of Leadership Style and Professional Competence**

The simultaneous model explained 50.8% of the variance in teaching skills ( $R^2 = 0.508$ ), representing a meaningful increase of approximately 7% over professional competence alone and 15% over leadership style alone. This incremental gain demonstrates that the two predictors provide complementary, non-redundant contributions to teaching skill—a result supported by the low multicollinearity between predictors ( $VIF = 1.472$ ). The finding reinforces the theoretical framework proposed by Nurhayati and Samsudin (2021), who identified both leadership support and professional competence as necessary enabling conditions for high-quality teaching.

Compared to Afridawati (2019), where the combined effect of leadership and competence on teacher performance was only 13.3%, the combined  $R^2$  of 50.8% in the present study highlights the important role of construct specificity: teaching skill captures instructional behavior more directly than performance ratings, making it more responsive to targeted organizational and individual-level predictors. This finding is also consistent with Mulyasa's (2021) theoretical proposition that effective teaching emerges from the confluence of supportive leadership and adequate professional capability.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study provides quantitative evidence that principal leadership style and teacher professional competence are each significant positive predictors of teaching skill in senior high schools in Tomohon City. Professional competence ( $R^2 = 0.435$ ) exerts a stronger individual influence than principal leadership style ( $R^2 = 0.356$ ), and the two predictors jointly explain 50.8% of the variance in teaching skill ( $R^2 = 0.508$ ). These findings affirm that improvements in both domain areas are necessary and

mutually reinforcing: strong leadership creates the organizational conditions for teachers to grow professionally, while well-developed professional competence enables teachers to translate that growth into observable and effective classroom practices. The results carry direct implications for school governance in Tomohon City and analogous educational contexts. Principals should adopt flexible, responsive leadership that includes specific instructional guidance, professional development facilitation, and continuous feedback. School systems should prioritize sustained professional competence programs, including subject-matter deepening, pedagogical training, and digital literacy. Future research should investigate mediating variables (e.g., school climate, teacher motivation) and expand the sample to other regions and school levels to enhance generalizability.

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