

The Relationship between Principals' Managerial Behavior and Teachers' Job Stress: A Systematic Review of the Literature

Muhammad Hasnan Bagas¹, Enung Hasanah², Sukirman³

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan

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Abstract

The Relationship Between Principals' Managerial Behavior and Teachers' Work Stress: Systematic Review of the Literature. Teacher job stress is a critical issue in education, impacting the quality of learning and psychological well-being. Amidst increasing professional demands, the principal's role as a managerial leader is a key determinant in creating a supportive work environment or exacerbating work stress. This study aims to analyze how principals' managerial behavior impacts teacher job stress. The method used was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, analyzing 11 empirical studies from the Indonesian school context published between 2021 and 2025. Data were collected through systematic identification across various journal databases and were synthesized thematically. The results indicate that principals' managerial behavior has a dual role: as a stress trigger (if authoritarian, non-transparent, or unresponsive) and as a stress reducer (if humanistic, adaptive, and supportive). Two main pathways were identified: emotional interactions (psychological support, open communication) and organizational structures (workload management, facilities, reward systems), which simultaneously reduce stress and increase teacher commitment and performance. This confirms that welfare-based school leadership is not only ideal but is a necessity in creating a healthy and sustainable educational environment.

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Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Hasnan Bagas

Ahmad Dahlan University

Email Correspondent: 2408046068@webmail.uad.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key pillar in developing quality human resources, and teachers play a key role in the educational process (Ali et al., 2025). However, in carrying out their roles, teachers often face various pressures that can potentially trigger work stress, such as administrative burdens, curriculum demands, and the dynamics of personal interactions within the school environment (Retta et al., 2025). Prolonged work stress not only disrupts teachers' personal well-being but also negatively impacts the quality of learning, student motivation, and the overall school climate (Satria et al., 2025), (Nofitasari et al., 2025), (Fanny et al., 2025).

According to Amelia et al. (2025), one of the most important factors in shaping a teacher's work environment is the principal's managerial behavior. As a manager, the principal is not only tasked with managing school resources but also creating a supportive, communicative, and collaborative organizational culture (Dike, 2025). According to Santoso & Perkasa (2024), leadership style, feedback, and involvement in decision-making are some of the behaviors associated with a manager. Responding to subordinates' needs is one of the roles a manager must perform (Pramanda & Priyatmono, 2025). According to Amelia et al. (2025), managerial behavior can be a buffer or a trigger for work stress for teachers.

Recent research has shown a significant relationship between school leadership and teacher well-being. For example, principals who employ transformational or instructional styles tend to reduce teacher emotional exhaustion, while authoritarian or opaque behavior exacerbates feelings of anxiety and helplessness (Jayadi et al., 2025; Restina & Rahmadanirwati, 2025; Azmi & Burhan, 2025). These findings are scattered across diverse theoretical frameworks and have not yet been comprehensively synthesized.

This condition indicates the need for a systematic and transparent synthesis of scientific evidence. Several studies have explored the topic of leadership and teacher stress, but there is still little analysis of the relationship between principal managerial behavior and teacher work stress, which allows principal managerial policies not to address the psychological problems of educators. Based on the topic of the Relationship between Principal Managerial Behavior and Teacher Work Stress, the research question can be formulated as: How is the Relationship between Principal Managerial Behavior and Teacher Work Stress?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) that aims to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical evidence regarding the relationship between principals' managerial behavior and teacher work stress. The SLR approach was chosen because it provides a transparent, replicable, and criterion-based evidence synthesis. The entire research process was designed and implemented in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) to ensure methodological quality and accountability (Chamarthi et al., 2025). The search for articles in this SLR study used keywords related to the title, namely Principal Managerial Behavior and Teacher Work Stress.

After formulating the research questions, the article selection process was carried out systematically according to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency, objectivity, and replicability. This process includes identification, screening, and eligibility evaluation, and the final inclusion of studies that meet the criteria. The study selection process is presented in a PRISMA diagram, which illustrates the number of studies identified, the number eliminated at each stage, and the number of studies ultimately included in the synthesis. The following illustrates the article selection process using a PRISMA diagram:

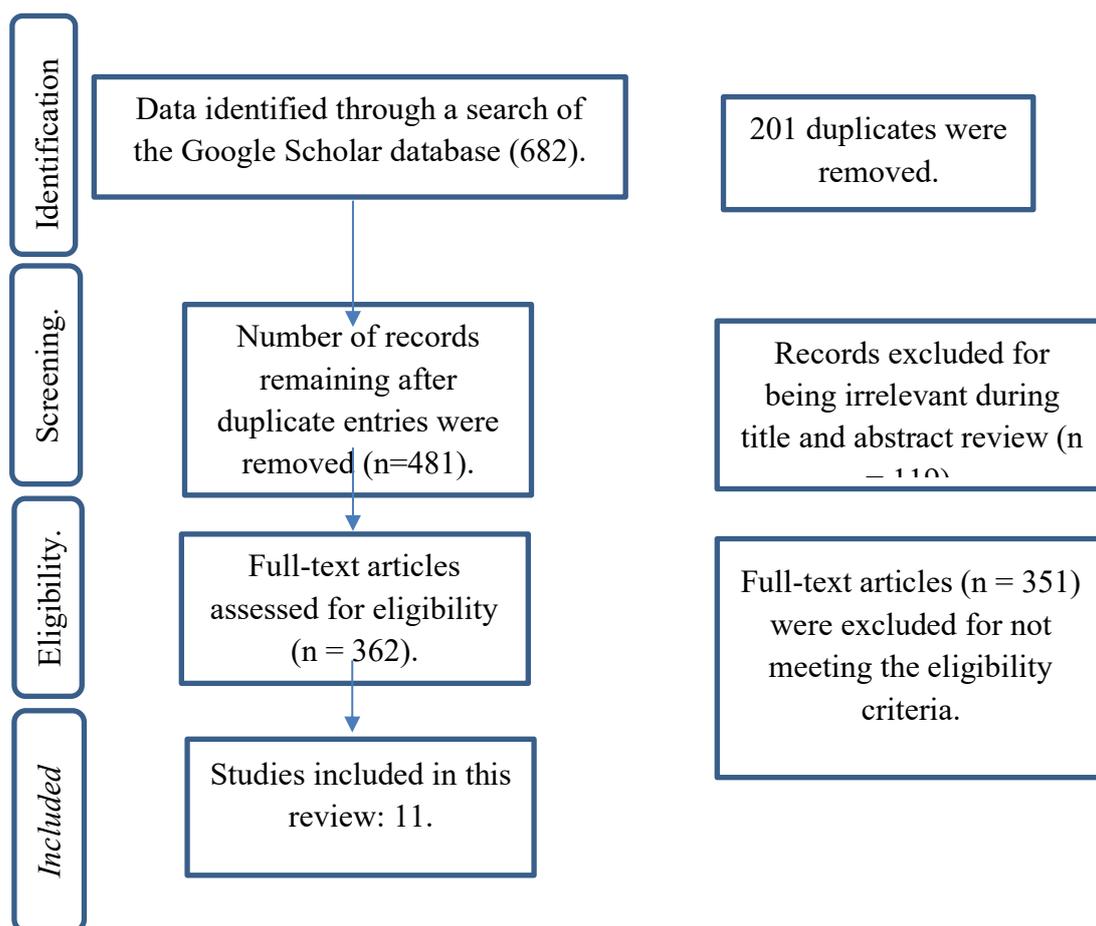


Figure 1: PRISMA Diagram

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

As part of the thematic synthesis in this Systematic Literature Review (SLR), an analysis was conducted of 11 selected articles that met the criteria. The articles came from various school contexts in Indonesia and were published between 2021 and 2025. The following is a systematic summary of the authors' names, publication years, research titles, and research findings in accordance with the research question: how principals' managerial behavior relates to teachers, specifically in relation to work stress, psychological well-being, motivation, and professional commitment. This synthesis serves as the basis for identifying patterns, research findings, and leadership strategies that can reduce teachers' work stress in carrying out their duties.

Table 1:
Synthesis of Articles Related to the Relationship between Principals' Managerial Behavior and Teachers

No	Name, Year	Title	Research result
1	(Silalahi & Marpaung, 2025)	Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mengurangi Stres Kerja Guru: Studi Kasus Di Smk	Principals who implement transformational leadership are able to reduce teacher work stress through emotional support, open communication, proportional workload management, and providing continuous motivation.
2	(Ridiyawati et al., 2025)	Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mengelola Stres Kerja Guru Di Sdn 01 Klegen	Principals manage teacher work stress through a number of strategies, namely: creating a conducive work environment, providing emotional support, opening open communication, organizing training and professional development, and facilitating recreational activities and collaboration between teachers.
3	(Kalake & Wahid, 2025)	Pengaruh Manajerial Kepala Sekolah Dan Fasilitas Kerja Terhadap Loyalitas Kerja Guru	The principal's managerial abilities and work facilities have a significant influence on teacher work loyalty.
4	(Doni et al., 2025)	Kepemimpinan Emosional Kepala Sekolah Dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Perilaku Prososial Guru	The emotional leadership of the principal has a positive influence on the prosocial behavior of teachers and the organizational climate of the school.
5	(Masriah & Puijilestari, 2025)	Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Visioner Kepala Sekolah, Budaya Organisasi, Dan Kecerdasan Emosional Guru Terhadap Peningkatan Kinerja Guru	The principal's visionary leadership, organizational culture, and emotional intelligence have a significant influence on teacher performance, both partially and simultaneously.
6	(Nurdin et al., 2021)	Pengaruh Kecerdasan Emosional Guru, Perilaku Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah, Dan Iklim Kerja Terhadap Pengelolaan Stres Kerja Guru Sd Negeri Di Kecamatan Ampana Kota Kabupaten Tojo Una-Una	Teachers' emotional intelligence, principal leadership behavior, and work climate jointly influence teachers' work stress management.
7	(Abas et al., 2024)	Hubungan Kemampuan Manajerial Kepala Sekolah, Stres Dan Etos Kerja Terhadap Komitmen Guru	The principal's managerial ability, work stress, and work ethic are positively and significantly related to teacher commitment.

8	(Muspawi & Putri R, 2023)	Upaya Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mengendalikan Stress Kerja Guru Di Sd Negeri 219/Ix Muaro Jambi	The principal applies five main strategies, namely (1) providing psychological guidance, support and motivation, (2) implementing a guidance program containing tips for dealing with work stress, (3) identifying factors that cause teacher stress, (4) holding monthly training or professional development to manage emotions, and (5) holding regular meetings for discussion and requesting daily reports from teachers on student development.
9	(Saptaputra & Salma, 2024)	Edukasi Manajemen Stress Kerja Pada Guru Sekolah Dasar Negeri 21 Lantawonua Tahun 2024	The educational activities successfully increased teachers' knowledge about work stress management, helped them cope with work pressure, improved their health, productivity, and ability to adapt to stress in the work environment.
10	(Zaini et al., 2022)	Upaya Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mengatasi Stres Kerja Guru	The principal addresses teacher stress through two approaches: (1) Individual approach (smiles, greetings, home visits, counseling, sports), and (2) Organizational approach (providing motivation, guidance, honorariums, study tours, and competitions).
11	(Pujiningsih & Miyono, 2024)	Strategi Kepala Sekolah Manajemen Stres Guru Dalam Organisasi Pendidikan Di Sdn Sumbermulyo Rembang	The principal implemented various strategies, namely: (1) observation and interviews to identify teacher stress, (2) providing light psychoeducation, (3) strengthening digital literacy in the use of learning tools, (4) joint evaluation and reflection, and (5) creating a comfortable work environment.

The 11 articles above not only demonstrate the diversity of contexts, methods, and research focuses, but also demonstrate a common pattern regarding the principal's role in managing teacher work stress. This demonstrates that principals' managerial behavior is a key factor directly or indirectly influencing teachers' psychological well-being and performance.

Based on the synthesis of the 11 articles above published between 2021 and 2025, it can be seen that:

4. The principal's managerial behavior has a dual role in relation to teacher work stress, namely as a trigger for teacher work stress and as a reducer of teacher work stress.

5. The relationship between the principal's managerial behavior and teacher work stress is mediated through two channels, namely the emotional interaction channel and the organizational structural channel, as follows:
6. In the emotional interaction pathway, authoritarian leadership styles, a lack of empathy, and opaque communication can lead to emotional exhaustion and reduced teacher performance. Conversely, transformational and visionary leadership styles, coupled with psychological support, guidance, appreciation, and openness, can more effectively reduce work stress and improve teacher performance.
7. Structural aspects of the organization also play a crucial role in reducing work stress, such as managing a proportional workload, providing adequate facilities, providing fair work assignments, and providing rewards, all contributing to a conducive work environment. If these aspects are addressed and managed well by the principal, teachers will feel valued, protected, and able to focus on their primary task of teaching, leading to high performance.
8. Teacher work stress is not only about the number of tasks or the teacher's workload, but also about feelings of being unappreciated, role ambiguity, and lack of opportunities to manage oneself.
9. Academic publication trends also indicate that interest in this topic remained relatively stable until 2023, then increased significantly in 2024–2025. This reflects growing global and local awareness of psychological conditions in educational settings. This increase not only signals a social urgency but also opens up opportunities for evidence-based policy development.
10. Principals who are successful in managing teacher work stress generally combine individual approaches, such as counseling, home visits, and a smile-greet culture, with planned organizational support, such as teacher training, joint reflection, study tours, and realistic digital literacy reinforcement.

Based on the formulated research question, namely, how the relationship between the principal's managerial behavior and teacher work stress can be known through synthesis findings to answer the research question that positive managerial behavior, such as transformational leadership, emotional support, open communication, fair workload management, and a supportive organizational climate, consistently have an impact on reducing teacher work stress levels. Conversely, negative managerial behavior, such as authoritarian, non-transparent, and unresponsive leadership styles, can cause symptoms of teacher work stress. Thus, the principal's managerial behavior in this context is not only the presence of the principal, but the quality and direction of his managerial behavior are also determinants in providing an impact on teacher work stress, namely as a reducer or actually becoming a trigger for teacher work stress.

Overall, principals' managerial behavior has a significant and inverse relationship with teacher job stress. This means that the better the quality of managerial behavior (especially supportive and transformational behavior), the lower the teacher's job stress levels. The following are key points from the analysis of available sources, which demonstrate that good managerial behavior can be identified through several factors, including:

11. The Role of Transformational Leadership

Principals who adopt a transformational leadership style are able to create an environment that minimizes teacher mental stress. This is achieved through:

12. Emotional support by providing space for teachers to feel appreciated.
13. Open communication by reducing information uncertainty, which is often a trigger for stress.

14. Workload management by ensuring that tasks are distributed proportionally so that teachers do not experience burnout.
15. Work Environment Management Strategy
Effective managerial behavior includes creating conducive working conditions. Strategies identified in the research include:
16. Professional development by holding training to improve teacher competency so that they feel more confident in teaching.
17. Recreational & collaborative activities by facilitating social interactions between teachers to strengthen the support system in schools.

18. Emotional Intelligence Integration

Managerial behavior isn't just about technical (administrative) aspects, but also emotional aspects. Principals with high emotional intelligence and a clear vision tend to foster a healthy organizational climate, which automatically impacts the psychological stability of teachers.

From 11 articles, it was confirmed that the principal's managerial behavior has a significant relationship with teacher work stress, thus strengthening the answer to the research question, which explains the relationship between the principal's managerial behavior and teacher work stress in the Indonesian educational environment.

The principal's managerial behavior includes the ability to coordinate resources, lead staff, make decisions, build communication, and create a conducive organizational climate (Seki et al., 2025; Sholahuddin et al., 2025; Hia et al., 2025), (Wahyudi et al., 2025). According to Julia (2025), in implementing the principal's managerial must be carried out with a pedagogical and humanitarian orientation. Not only managing administration or pursuing organizational targets, but the principal's managerial behavior should also be able to balance the demands of the organization with the needs and psychological conditions of teachers as the main actors in learning activities.

Discussion

The 11 articles analyzed in this SLR reinforce, both theoretically and practically, that a principal's managerial behavior is not merely an administrative function, but rather goes beyond simply managing documents and procedures. A leader's actions and decisions are fundamental factors in determining the psychological well-being of educators. When implemented consciously, this managerial aspect creates a solid foundation for sustainable teacher performance improvement.

In academic discourse, various literature has examined this phenomenon from various perspectives, ranging from different educational levels to varying research methodologies. The focus of the studies is also very broad, encompassing crucial elements such as levels of work stress, loyalty to the institution, professional commitment, and objective performance achievements. Despite the diverse loci, all these findings converge on the same conclusion regarding the significant influence of leadership figures in schools.

Essentially, school principals play a dual, dichotomous role in the education ecosystem. On the one hand, rigid and non-adaptive managerial behavior risks becoming a major source of stress for teachers. A leader's inability to adapt to school dynamics often creates a toxic work environment, which directly erodes the motivation and mental health of educators.

Conversely, principals have the potential to be effective stress reducers if they implement a humanistic, responsive, and open leadership style. By prioritizing empathy and two-way communication, leaders serve not only as superiors but also as supporters who

can neutralize work pressures. This inclusive environment will ultimately foster teacher loyalty and dedication to educating the nation.

The relationship between principals' managerial behavior and teacher job stress manifests itself through two pathways: (1) the emotional pathway and (2) the organizational structural pathway. The emotional pathway, which includes authoritarian, non-transparent, or empathetic leadership, as mentioned in (Zaini et al., 2022) and (Nurdin et al., 2021), actually exacerbates symptoms of job stress, such as emotional exhaustion, oversensitivity, and decreased teaching enthusiasm. Conversely, transformational (Silalahi & Marpaung, 2025), emotional (Doni et al., 2025), and visionary (Masriah & Puijilestari, 2025) leadership styles consistently emerge as effective strategies. Their main characteristics are emotional support, open communication, genuine appreciation, and a willingness to listen, which psychologically create a sense of security and appreciation. This is in line with the job demands-resources theory in (Prabowo & Wahyuni, 2024) that job demands and job resources influence employee psychological well-being. This can be interpreted as meaning that work stress occurs due to an imbalance between Job Demands (work demands, time pressure) and Job Resources (social support, autonomy, feedback). In this case, the principal's managerial behavior acts as a Job Resource. Good and appropriate managerial behavior by the principal, such as providing support and autonomy, can reduce the impact of high work demands and thus reduce teacher work stress. Meanwhile, poor managerial behavior will increase the burden of work demands and can trigger teacher work stress. Work stress in educational environments often arises from a wide gap between the workload and the availability of supporting facilities. In the Job Demands-Resources model, stress is not simply the result of excessive workload, but rather the result of a chronic imbalance where job demands such as time pressure, heavy administrative burdens, and emotional expectations are not balanced by adequate job resources. When teachers feel that the energy they expend is far greater than the support they receive, physical and mental exhaustion becomes an inevitable consequence.

The principal's managerial role occupies a central position as the primary resource provider for teachers. Effective leadership acts as a protective instrument, capable of mitigating the negative impacts of high work demands. By providing autonomy in developing classroom curriculum and providing social support in the form of appreciation and open communication, the principal creates a healthy work environment. In this environment, even though teachers face complex instructional challenges, the presence of managerial support serves as a buffer, preventing these challenges from becoming destructive stress.

Conversely, poor managerial behavior can be an additional risk factor that exacerbates teacher workloads. When a principal adopts an overly controlling leadership style (micromanagement), rarely provides constructive feedback, or is insensitive to technical difficulties in the field, this automatically increases job demands. This lack of autonomy makes teachers feel powerless over their own work, ultimately leading to cynicism and decreased work motivation. In this scenario, managers are no longer a solution, but rather a source of additional stress for educators.

As a concrete example, imagine a school implementing a new curriculum with tight reporting deadlines (high demands). Teacher well-being will be maintained if the principal provides flexibility in teaching methods and regularly holds sharing sessions to solve common challenges (managerial support). However, if, in the same situation, the principal instead increases unproductive coordination meetings and demands administrative reports without providing clear guidance, teachers will experience acute work stress, feeling squeezed by the constant demands without any breathing space or tangible support.

Furthermore, the organizational structure reflects how the principal manages a fair and supportive work system. Research conducted by Kalake & Wahid (2025), Muspawi & Putri R (2023), and Pujiningsih & Miyono (2024) shows that proportional workload management, adequate facilities, a clear reward system, professional training, and realistic digital literacy management are the foundations of a healthy work climate. This proves that teacher stress arises not only from the teaching task itself but also from an imbalance between demands and available resources. Principals who cannot provide supportive facilities leave teachers feeling trapped in a situation where there is no solution from their leaders when problems arise.

Nearly all research, particularly in (Ridiyawati et al., 2025), (Muspawi & Putri R, 2023), and (Zaini et al., 2022), emphasizes that the most effective strategy is a combination of individual and organizational approaches. For example, professional training (organizational) without emotional interaction (individual) will feel like an additional burden. This combination reflects holistic leadership that focuses not only on managing systems but also on managing people humanely.

4. CONCLUSION

Principals' managerial behavior has a significant impact on teacher work stress. Principals who implement transformational, emotional, and visionary leadership, characterized by emotional support, open communication, proportional workload management, and the creation of a fair and supportive organizational climate, have proven effective in reducing teacher work stress. Conversely, authoritarian, non-transparent, or unresponsive managerial behavior actually exacerbates emotional exhaustion and reduces psychological well-being or exacerbates teacher work stress. Therefore, principals are not merely administrative managers but also key actors in maintaining the mental health of educators. Therefore, developing leadership based on psychological well-being needs to be a priority in school leadership policies and training.

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