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THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP, TEACHER PERFORMANCE, AND SCHOOL CLIMATE ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate on the quality of education in State Senior Secondary Schools across eastern Indonesia, focusing on areas that face similar challenges in education management. This research employs a quantitative approach with a survey method and was conducted in seven public schools spread across the four geographical areas of the district. The total population consisted of 1,144 teachers from 21 schools, with a sample of 92 respondents selected randomly. The data collection technique used Likert scale questionnaires, documentation, and observation. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software version 25, including validity, reliability, normality, linearity, multiple linear regression, t-tests, F-tests, and the determination coefficient (R^2). The results of the study showed that the three independent variables principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate had a significant effect on the quality of education, both partially and simultaneously. Among these, school climate had the most dominant influence, followed by principal leadership and teacher performance. The resulting regression equation is $Y = -95.143 + 1.437X_1 + 1.097X_2 + 1.588X_3$. The determination coefficient (R^2) value of 0.495 indicates that 49.5% of the variation in education quality can be explained by these three variables. These findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to improving education quality, which includes visionary leadership, teacher professionalism, and a conducive school environment. The recommendations are directed at policymakers to place greater emphasis on interventions related to the internal aspects of schools that significantly contribute to the quality of education.

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Keywords: Principal Leadership, Quality of Education, School Climate, Teacher Performance

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is key to shaping a superior generation capable of competing globally, particularly in developing countries that face significant challenges in improving access to and the quality of education (Grek & Russell, 2024; Martín-Gutiérrez et al., 2024; Sepúlveda-Parrini et al., 2024; Spruyt et al., 2024). This issue has become even more critical in the era of disruption, where technology and globalization are influencing education systems worldwide (Alfaisal et al., 2024; Alrikabi et al., 2024; Dhananjaya et al., 2024; Parker et al., 2024). To achieve this, the government has developed various strategic policies outlined in Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 246/O/2024, such as strengthening the leadership of school principals, enhancing teacher professionalism, and fostering a conducive school climate (Republik Indonesia, 2024). Approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and the integration of information technology in educational management are essential strategies to drive efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation in educational services (Fraihat et al., 2023; Gichure & Gitonga, 2024; Ruso & Glogovac, 2023) In CIPO (Context-Input-Process-Output) theory Scheerens (2015), The quality of education is influenced by contextual factors, including socio-economic conditions, available resources, and the management processes that take place in schools (Kawuryan et al., 2021; Murcahyanto & Haritani, 2024). This research focuses on internal school factors, namely the principal's leadership, teacher performance, and school climate, as key elements in improving the quality of education. Transformational leadership theory, put forward by (Bass & Ronald E. Riggio, 2006), Inspirational leaders are able to create a collaborative work environment that supports positive change in educational organizations. The principal is responsible for the success of educational implementation by managing school administration and its core components. In addition, the principal is accountable for the quality of existing resources, ensuring they are capable of carrying out their duties in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities (Gatell & Avella, 2024; Mahameed et al., 2024). On the other hand, performance theory (Gibson et al., 2009) explains that individual performance is influenced by personal, psychological, and organizational factors, all of which contribute to creating quality education (D. Gibson et al., 2023; Tartila et al., 2020).

However, these expectations are not fully aligned with the reality on the ground. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 2024, the quality of education in eastern Indonesia still faces significant challenges, with literacy and numeracy achievements varying across provinces, including areas such as Papua and Sulawesi (Kemendikdasmen, 2024). The researcher's initial observations also revealed an imbalance between the quality of the principal's leadership, the involvement of teachers in policy decisions, and the low interest in learning among students. Previous research by Lachner et al., (2024) highlighting that teachers' pedagogic competence greatly affects learning outcomes, while Diana et al., (2022); Sartika et al., (2021) emphasizing the importance of the principal's leadership in shaping teacher performance and school culture. The role of school principals as learning leaders still faces various implementation challenges. Previous research has shown that principal leadership, teacher performance, and school

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climate are key determinants in improving the quality of education. However, the teacher training programs conducted have not fully enhanced innovative and reflective skills in teaching. Additionally, the school climate, which is supposed to foster a positive environment, still faces obstacles such as low parental involvement, weak school culture, and a lack of strong social relations among school members.

Based on the gap between expectations and reality, this research is highly relevant for providing new insights into improving the quality of education in eastern Indonesia, where many challenges remain in terms of leadership quality, teacher performance, and a conducive school climate. The results of this research are expected to offer practical recommendations that can be implemented by education policymakers at the regional level. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the three main variables into one comprehensive analysis model, supported by empirical data from direct observations and field studies. Furthermore, this research will provide practical policy recommendations that can be utilized by regional education stakeholders to design quality improvement strategies in a more targeted and sustainable manner. By understanding the relationship between these three variables simultaneously, it is hoped that the quality of education can be improved holistically, producing graduates who are superior, adaptive, and ready to face global challenges.

METHOD

This study is quantitative research with an explanatory survey approach, aimed at analyzing the influence of principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate on the quality of education. The survey was designed to understand the relationship between these factors and the quality of education, with a focus on correlational analysis. The research was conducted in seven State High Schools across several provinces in eastern Indonesia, including West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, Papua, and Sulawesi, during the period from March to August 2025. The population of this study includes all teachers in 21 State High Schools in eastern Indonesia, totaling 1,144 individuals. Random sampling was used, with a sample of 92 respondents from seven State High Schools, selected purposively to reflect the diversity of geographical and socio-economic characteristics in eastern Indonesia. These schools were chosen to represent areas facing similar challenges in improving the quality of education.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: (1) a closed questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale to measure teachers' perceptions of principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate; (2) documentation, which included secondary data related to educational achievements and school policies; and (3) observation to directly assess school climate conditions. The questionnaire instrument was tested for validity through expert judgment and for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded values above 0.7, indicating a good level of internal consistency. The data consisted of primary data obtained from questionnaires completed by teachers and principals, as well as secondary data obtained from official school documents related to educational policies and achievements.

The data collection process took place from March to August 2025, with follow-up every two weeks to ensure optimal response rates. The research instrument was tested for validity

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(Pearson Product Moment) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software version 25. Before performing multiple linear regression analysis, the data were first tested for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and for linearity using the scatterplot test. The test results showed that the data met the assumptions of normality and linearity, allowing for valid multiple linear regression analysis. Furthermore, the data were analyzed through prerequisite tests for normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and linearity, followed by multiple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The hypothesis test was conducted partially using the t-test and simultaneously using the F-test, with further reinforcement from the determination coefficient (R^2) test to measure the contribution of the independent variables to the quality of education. The inter-variable relationship model was visualized through the research constellation to show the direction and strength of the influence of each of the variables studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate significantly influence the quality of education in state high schools in Eastern Indonesia. To test this relationship, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-95.143	41.037	–	-2.318	.023
Principal's Leadership	1.437	0.231	0.473	6.231	.000
Teacher Performance	1.097	0.311	0.268	3.530	.001
School Climate	1.588	0.247	0.485	6.419	.000

The regression results demonstrate that:

- Principal's leadership has a positive and significant effect on educational quality ($\beta = 0.473$, $p < 0.001$).
- Teacher performance also shows a significant contribution ($\beta = 0.268$, $p = 0.001$).
- School climate exhibits the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.485$, $p < 0.001$).

These findings suggest that effective leadership, improved teacher performance, and a conducive school climate are critical determinants of education quality in the studied context.

The results of the multiple linear regression test showed that the three independent variables principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate had a significant influence on the quality of education as the dependent variable. This is indicated by the significance value

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(Sig.) of each variable, which is below the critical limit of 0.05, meaning that the three variables contribute significantly to the variation in the quality of education. In detail, the principal's leadership variable has a regression coefficient of 1,437 with a value of t = 6,231 and p = 0.000, indicating that every one unit increase in the principal's leadership score will increase the quality of education by 1,437 units, assuming other variables remain the same. Furthermore, the teacher's performance had a coefficient value of 1,097, with t = 3,530 and p = 0.001, which was also significant, although the contribution was smaller than the other two variables. Meanwhile, the school climate makes the highest contribution to the quality of education. With a regression coefficient of 1,588, t = 6,419, and p = 0,000, it indicates that positive school environment conditions are an important factor in improving the quality of education.

In addition, the constant value of the model, -95.143, shows that if the three independent variables are zero, the quality of education would theoretically be negative. In practice, this indicates that without effective leadership, good teacher performance, and a conducive school climate, the quality of education will not be achieved. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of synergy between managerial, professional, and environmental factors in shaping optimal educational quality. The resulting regression model is not only statistically significant but also practically relevant in the formulation of policies and strategies to improve the quality of education in educational units.

From the regression coefficient values obtained, the following multiple regression equation can be compiled: $Y = -95.143 + 1.437X_1 + 1.097X_2 + 1.588X_3$, where Y represents the quality of education, X1 is the principal's leadership, X2 is the teacher's performance, and X3 is the school climate. This equation indicates that each one-unit increase in each independent variable will increase the quality of education by the value of its coefficient, assuming all other variables remain constant.

Partial Test Results

The Influence of School Principal Leadership on the Quality of Education in State High Schools in Eastern Indonesia

Table 2. Results of Partial Test of School Principal's Leadership on Education Quality

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	141.779	24.586	–	5.767	.000
Principal's Leadership	1.359	0.287	0.447	4.737	.000

Source: SPSS research data processing results

The analysis reveals that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on the quality of education in state high schools in Eastern Indonesia. The standardized coefficient (β =

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0.447, $p < 0.001$) indicates that improvements in principal leadership are strongly associated with higher levels of educational quality. This suggests that effective leadership practices by principals play a crucial role in shaping organizational direction, motivating teachers, and fostering a conducive learning environment.

Based on the SPSS output table above, a regression coefficient value (B) of 1,359 and a calculated t-value of 4,737 with a significance of 0.000, each increase of one unit of the principal's leadership score will increase by 1,359 points. This shows that the better the leadership of the school principal, the better the quality of education. Because t_{count} 4,737 is greater than t_{table} 1,662, Ho was rejected which showed that H1 was accepted so that the leadership of the school principal had a significant influence on the quality of education in State High Schools throughout eastern Indonesia. These findings are in line with, the transformational leadership theory that was developed Bass & Ronald E. Riggio, (2006) which states that transformational leadership is able to inspire, motivate, and generate high commitment from the organization's members. Principals who practice transformational leadership are able to create a visionary, supportive, and collaborative work environment, which can improve the quality of education. This is also in line with the findings Lachner et al., (2024)that the leadership of school principals has a real impact in shaping the work environment and teacher behavior which has implications for improving the quality of education as a whole.

The Effect of Teacher Performance on the Quality of Education in State High Schools in Eastern Indonesia

Table 3. Results of Partial Test of Teacher Performance on Education Quality

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	183.547	36.143	–	5.078	.000
Teacher Performance	0.868	0.422	0.212	2.057	.043

Source: SPSS research data processing results

The results indicate that teacher performance significantly influences the quality of education in state high schools in Eastern Indonesia, with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.212$ and a significance value of $p = 0.043$. Although the effect size is relatively smaller compared to leadership and school climate, the finding suggests that improvements in teacher performance—such as effective teaching methods, classroom management, and professional commitment—contribute meaningfully to enhancing educational quality.

Based on the SPSS output table above, a regression coefficient value (B) of .868 and a calculated t-value of 2.057 with a significance of 0.043, each increase of one unit of teacher performance score will increase the quality of education by 0.868 points. This shows that the better the teacher's performance, the better the quality of education. Because t_{count} 2,057 is greater than t

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table 1,662, Ho was rejected which shows that H1 was accepted so that teacher performance has a significant influence on the quality of education in State High Schools in eastern Indonesia.

These findings are in line with performance theory according to (L. J. Gibson et al., 2009), which states that a person's performance is influenced by three main factors, namely *ability*, motivation, and perception of role *perception*. These three groups of variables interact synergistically and influence each other in determining work behavior, in this case teacher performance. In this case, teachers who have good professional and pedagogic skills, supported by high motivation to teach, and understand their role clearly in the learning process, will produce high performance. This performance has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the learning process, curriculum achievement, and character development of students. This is an indicator of the quality of education.

The Influence of School Climate on the Quality of Education in State High Schools in Eastern Indonesia

Table 4. Results of Partial Test of School Climate on Education Quality

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	124.870	26.221	–	4.762	.000
School Climate	1.545	0.304	0.473	5.086	.000

Source: SPSS research data processing results

The regression analysis shows that the school climate has a strong and significant influence on the quality of education in state high schools in Eastern Indonesia. The regression coefficient (B = 1.545) indicates that for every one-unit increase in the school climate score, the quality of education improves by 1.545 points. The t-value (t = 5.086) is greater than the critical value of t-table (1.662), with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, confirming that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

This finding demonstrates that a positive and supportive school climate—characterized by effective communication, collaboration, mutual respect, and a safe learning environment—plays a critical role in enhancing educational outcomes. The better the school climate, the higher the quality of education that can be achieved.

The findings are in line with the school organization's climate theory put forward by Hoy & Miskel, (2013), which emphasizes that the school climate is an internal condition that reflects the common perception of school residents of the social environment, leadership, and interaction between individuals in the school. The school climate reflects the personality of the school organization which is reflected in the relationships between the principal, teachers, students, and staff. A healthy, open and supportive climate, running well, the principal provides support, and teachers are appreciated will create a conducive learning environment so that it has a positive

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impact on the quality of education. According to Kinanti Asikin et al., (2023) A positive school climate is very important for school effectiveness which affects the commitment of teachers which ultimately contributes to the quality of education. Next (Teresia et al., 2022)The school climate plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education, while a conducive environment also supports the achievement of optimal education.

Simultaneous Test Results

Table 5. Results of Simultaneous Test of Principal's Leadership, Teacher Performance, and School Climate on Education Quality

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	29,073.487	3	9,691.162	29.018	.000[b]
Residual	29,389.590	88	333.973	–	–
Total	58,463.076	91	–	–	–

Source: SPSS research data processing results

The ANOVA results show that the combined influence of principal's leadership, teacher performance, and school climate on the quality of education is statistically significant. The regression analysis produced an F-value of 29.018, which is greater than the F-table value of 2.708 at $\alpha = 0.05$ with degrees of freedom ($df = 3, 88$). The corresponding significance value ($p = 0.000$) further supports the conclusion that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

This means that principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate simultaneously have a significant positive effect on the quality of education in state high schools in Eastern Indonesia. Together, these three factors form a comprehensive model where leadership provides direction, teacher performance ensures instructional quality, and school climate creates a conducive learning environment—all of which jointly determine overall educational quality.

Conceptually, these findings support the policies stated in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture No. 246/O/2024, which emphasizes that the quality of education is the result of an integrated managerial process, learning process, and educational unit climate. Improving the quality of education cannot be done partially, but must target the strengthening of all core aspects simultaneously and synergistically (Republik Indonesia, 2024).

This research also confirms the results of previous research on effective principal leadership that can create direction, vision, and support that strengthen the spirit and competence of teachers in carrying out their professional duties which contributes to improving the quality of learning and learning outcomes (Adriantoni et al., 2023). Furthermore, this study provides suggestions that are in line with the findings Sayman & Atienzar, (2023) that the leadership of the principal, through its strategic role, is able to create a work culture that encourages the improvement of teacher performance and the formation of a conducive school climate, all of which have an impact on the quality of education.

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Coefficient of Determination

Table 6. Results of the Coefficient of Determination for Principal's Leadership, Teacher Performance, and School Climate on Education Quality

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.704[a]	0.495	0.478	18.48933

Source: SPSS research data processing results

The model summary indicates that the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.704, suggesting a strong relationship between the independent variables (principal's leadership, teacher performance, and school climate) and the dependent variable (quality of education). The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.495, meaning that approximately 49.5% of the variance in education quality can be explained by the combined influence of the three independent variables. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.478 confirms the stability of the model after adjusting for the number of predictors.

This implies that while leadership, teacher performance, and school climate are significant predictors of education quality, the remaining 50.5% of the variation is influenced by other factors not included in this study, such as curriculum design, student motivation, parental involvement, and availability of educational resources.

The results of the test using SPSS revealed a determination coefficient value (R Square) of 0.495, which indicates that 49.5% of the variation in the quality of education can be explained by the three variables principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate simultaneously. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.478 indicates that, after adjusting for the number of predictors and the size of the sample, the model still explains 47.8% of the variation in educational quality accurately. The R-Square value, close to 0.5, suggests that half of the total variation in education quality can be influenced by the internal factors of the schools studied in this model. The remaining 50.5% is influenced by other variables not included in the model, such as student learning motivation, parental involvement, learning facilities, or education policies at the macro level. This is in accordance with the opinion Arina et al., (2023) which states that the quality of education is influenced by internal and external factors.

The test results showed that the three independent variables, namely the principal's leadership, teacher performance, and school climate, simultaneously had a meaningful influence on the quality of education. The coefficient of determination in this study provides a strong basis for concluding that the three independent variables are factors that should be considered in an effort to improve the quality of education. For this reason, efforts to improve the quality of education are focused on strengthening the leadership of visionary principals, improving teacher professionalism, and creating a school climate that is conducive, collaborative, and supports the learning process optimally.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, both partially and simultaneously, it can be concluded that principal leadership, teacher performance, and school climate significantly affect the quality of education in state high schools in eastern Indonesia. These three variables make a substantial contribution to improving the quality of education, with school climate having the most dominant influence, followed by principal leadership and teacher performance. The determination coefficient value of 49.5% indicates that nearly half of the variation in education quality can be explained by the internal factors of the school, while the remainder is influenced by other external variables that were not studied. Therefore, the strategy to improve the quality of education should focus on strengthening participatory and transformational leadership, enhancing teacher professionalism, and creating a healthy school environment that supports learning.

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