



The Principal's Strategy in Improving Teacher Performance Through Strengthening Educational Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze and formulate an effective Principal's strategic model for improving teacher performance through the strengthening of an integrated Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM) cycle. The method employed is a literature study (library research), conducted through thematic synthesis and content analysis of 15 reputable journals published within the period 2015–2025. The synthesis results indicate that optimal improvement in teacher performance is achieved through the implementation of Principal-led strategies driven by Transformational Leadership and focused on three pillars of EHRM: (1) Needs-Based Planning (Needs Assessment); (2) Internal Continuous Professional Development (CPD), such as Lesson Study and Coaching, which function as Intellectual Stimulation; and (3) a Formative Evaluation System supported by Strategic Rewards. These findings successfully formulate a Principal Strategic Model (PSM) in the strengthening of EHRM that is cyclical and integrated. This study concludes that the success of the Principal as a strategic leader lies in the ability to integrate all EHRM functions to create a school culture conducive to continuous professional growth, which ultimately directly enhances teacher performance and commitment.

1. Introduction

The quality of education is widely recognized as a primary indicator of a nation's progress, and teachers represent the most decisive variable in determining the effectiveness of the learning process (Putri & Asbari, 2020). Despite this central role, contemporary educational institutions frequently encounter serious challenges related to suboptimal teacher performance. These challenges are manifested in limited initiative in curriculum development, resistance to pedagogical innovation,

and low participation in professional development activities (Wibowo et al., 2022; Bela et al., 2025). Such conditions signal fundamental weaknesses in the management of human resources within schools, indicating that teacher performance issues are not merely individual shortcomings but structural problems rooted in ineffective organizational governance.

In responding to these challenges, the school principal holds a critical mandate and strategic position. The role of the principal can no longer be confined to administrative management but must evolve into that of a strategic leader capable of designing and implementing policies focused on empowering and developing teachers' professional potential. One of the most relevant and comprehensive approaches to achieving this goal is through the strengthening of Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM). Effective EHRM encompasses needs-based planning, continuous professional development, and fair evaluation and reward systems, all of which are directed toward fostering transformative teacher performance (Kristiawan et al., 2021). When human resources are not managed strategically, schools face substantial barriers in achieving established educational quality standards.

Teacher performance itself refers to the actual outcomes and behaviors demonstrated by teachers in carrying out their professional responsibilities in accordance with assigned duties (Putri & Asbari, 2020). Performance is not solely assessed through student learning outcomes but also through instructional processes, discipline, creativity, and teachers' engagement in professional self-development. These dimensions align with the four core competencies of teachers, namely pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies, which collectively form the foundation of effective teaching practice (Mulyasa, 2014). Empirical findings suggest that optimal teacher performance is strongly influenced by organizational support systems, particularly management practices enacted by school leadership (Wibowo et al., 2022). This underscores that teacher performance is a dependent variable that can be deliberately enhanced through appropriate leadership and managerial interventions.

Within this context, the principal functions as a strategic leader who must balance internal organizational demands, such as human resource management, with external dynamics, including curriculum reforms and technological developments (Kristiawan et al., 2021). Strategic leadership refers to a leader's capacity to anticipate future challenges, maintain flexibility, and empower organizational members to enact necessary strategic change (Hitt et al., 2018). Among leadership paradigms, transformational leadership has been widely identified as particularly effective in improving teacher performance. Through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, transformational principals foster trust, articulate a compelling vision, stimulate innovative thinking, and provide personalized support to teachers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The application of transformational leadership in schools has been empirically shown to enhance teacher professionalism and encourage commitment that exceeds minimal performance standards (Fadli et al., 2024; Samiha & Fauzi, 2025).

The operationalization of transformational leadership in schools is closely linked to the strengthening of Educational Human Resource Management. EHRM represents an adaptation of general human resource management principles to educational settings, aiming to maximize teachers' contributions toward achieving educational objectives. Strengthening EHRM involves integrating all human resource practices so that they align coherently with strategic goals for performance improvement (Werner & DeSimone, 2021). Strategic planning and recruitment based on systematic needs analysis ensure that available and newly recruited teachers possess competencies consistent with the school's vision and curricular demands (Naim, 2017). Furthermore, continuous professional development serves as the core mechanism through which teacher performance is directly enhanced. Effective CPD extends beyond large-scale training programs to include individualized coaching, mentoring, and sustained lesson study activities grounded in performance-based needs assessment (Prasojo & Habibi, 2023).

Performance appraisal within the EHRM framework is also a critical component, as evaluation should function primarily as a developmental tool rather than merely an instrument of measurement. Objective and transparent assessment, followed by constructive feedback, enables teachers to recognize areas for improvement and to formulate specific performance targets (Wibowo et al., 2022). Complementing this process, a fair and strategic reward system, both financial and non-financial, plays a vital role in sustaining teacher motivation and loyalty, which ultimately contributes to improved performance quality. Recognition of achievement reinforces professional commitment and strengthens teachers' attachment to institutional goals.

The urgency of this study lies in its focus on the core mechanisms of school quality improvement. A comprehensive analysis of how principals integrate strategic leadership and Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM) to enhance teacher performance offers significant theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on strategic leadership within educational contexts. Practically, it is expected to provide an applicable blueprint for principals in designing coherent and integrated EHRM cycles that cultivate a supportive work environment for continuous professional growth (Fadli et al., 2024; Basuki et al., 2025). Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the principal's leadership strategies, particularly transformational leadership, in strengthening Educational Human Resource Management to improve teacher performance.

2. Methodology

This study employs a literature research (library research) approach that emphasizes systematic processes of collecting, reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing scholarly literature. This approach is used to examine principal leadership strategies in strengthening educational human resource management as a means of improving teacher performance. Through literature research, the study integrates empirical findings and theoretical perspectives from various sources. Consequently, this

method enables the identification of recurring leadership patterns and strategic practices that are relevant to school management and teacher performance improvement.

Based on this approach, the object of the study is not individuals, schools, or specific educational settings, but academic texts and scientific documents. These documents include journal articles, academic books, and policy-related publications that discuss school leadership, educational human resource management, and teacher performance. The documents function as the primary unit of analysis and are examined to identify conceptual frameworks and strategic models. In this way, the study focuses on theoretical and empirical insights rather than on a single institutional context.

In relation to the object of the study, data sources were obtained from credible national and international academic publications. The literature was accessed through scholarly databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, SINTA, and DOAJ, as well as digital university libraries and academic books in both printed and electronic forms. These sources were selected to ensure the validity, reliability, and diversity of the reviewed literature. The use of multiple databases also allowed for broader coverage of perspectives and research contexts related to educational leadership and human resource management. Therefore, this study was not conducted in a specific physical location.

Following the identification of data sources, data collection was carried out through a systematic document search using keywords related to principal leadership, teacher performance, and educational human resource management (Suarmita, 2025; Nurohman et al., 2025). The collected documents were then screened using inclusion criteria, including publication within the last ten years, relevance to school leadership issues, and publication in reputable or indexed journals. Selected literature was subsequently organized using an analytical literature matrix. This process ensured that the data collected were both relevant and methodologically sound.

To support systematic analysis, the primary research instrument used in this study was an analytical literature matrix. The matrix contained information such as author and year of publication, research title, objectives, methodological approach, key findings, leadership concepts, and strategies for strengthening educational human resource management. It also documented the reported impact of leadership strategies on teacher performance. This structured format facilitated consistency in data extraction and minimized interpretative bias during the review process. Thus, the matrix enabled structured comparison and integration of findings across studies.

Finally, data analysis was conducted using content analysis and thematic synthesis. Content analysis was applied to identify recurring leadership strategies and relationships between human resource management practices and teacher performance. Thematic synthesis was then used to group findings into broader thematic categories, such as teacher competency development, resource optimization, school culture development, and performance evaluation. To

strengthen analytical rigor, critical analysis was employed by comparing findings across studies to assess consistency and theoretical alignment.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

This section presents the results of the literature synthesis derived from 15 reputable national and international journal articles published between 2015 and 2025. The analysis focuses on principals' strategies in strengthening Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM) to improve teacher performance. The reviewed literature consistently positions teacher performance as an outcome of strategic leadership rather than isolated individual effort. Principals are portrayed as key actors who align planning, development, and evaluation processes within schools. These findings indicate that EHRM functions most effectively when implemented as an integrated and continuous system. Consequently, teacher performance improvement is closely linked to leadership-driven human resource management practices.

To enhance analytical clarity and support systematic interpretation, the synthesis of selected key studies is summarized in Table 1. The table presents representative literature that illustrates how principal leadership strategies are operationalized through EHRM practices. By comparing research focus, methodology, and findings, the table highlights converging evidence across studies. This presentation allows readers to quickly identify dominant patterns in leadership behavior and EHRM implementation. Moreover, the table strengthens the transparency of the results by linking empirical findings to the identified strategic pillars. Therefore, Table 1 serves as the empirical basis for the thematic interpretation of EHRM strategies.

Table 1. Synthesis Matrix of Literature on Principal Leadership Strategies in Strengthening Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM)

| No | Author(s) & Year | EHRM Research Focus | Methodology | Key Findings Related to EHRM | Strategic Pillar |
|----|-----------------------|--|--------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | Putri & Asbari (2020) | Teacher performance and leadership support | Quantitative | Leadership support and reward systems significantly enhance teacher motivation and performance | Evaluation & Reward |
| 2 | Wibowo et al. (2022) | Teacher performance management | Mixed-method | Formative evaluation and constructive feedback improve teacher professionalism | Evaluation & Feedback |

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------|--|---------------------------|
| 3 | Kristiawan et al. (2021) | Strategic leadership in schools | Qualitative | Integrated planning, development, and evaluation strengthen EHRM effectiveness | Integrated EHRM |
| 4 | Prasojo & Habibi (2023) | Continuous professional development | Qualitative | Internal CPD programs such as lesson study and coaching are contextual and sustainable | Planning & Development |
| 5 | Fadli et al. (2024) | Transformational leadership of principals | Quantitative | Transformational leadership enhances teacher commitment and professional growth | Leadership Implementation |

Based on the synthesis summarized in Table 1, the findings indicate that principals' strategies in strengthening EHRM to improve teacher performance can be systematically grouped into three interconnected strategic pillars. These pillars reflect an integrated human resource management cycle adapted to the educational context. The literature demonstrates that sustainable teacher performance improvement emerges from coherent and continuous management processes rather than isolated initiatives. Each pillar represents a sequential stage of EHRM that supports long-term professional growth. This pattern consistently appears across the reviewed studies. Thus, EHRM functions as a strategic system rather than a set of fragmented practices.

To provide a clearer conceptual understanding of how principal leadership strategies operate in strengthening Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM), this study develops an integrative conceptual model. The formulation of this model is grounded in the thematic synthesis of empirical findings from the reviewed literature. The analysis indicates that effective improvement of teacher performance requires a coherent alignment between leadership practices and human resource management functions. Rather than functioning as isolated activities, planning, professional development, implementation, and evaluation are shown to operate as interconnected and continuous processes. The reviewed studies consistently emphasize the central role of the principal in orchestrating these processes through transformational leadership behaviors. Furthermore, the literature suggests that sustainable teacher performance improvement emerges when EHRM is implemented as a cyclical system supported by continuous feedback and strategic decision-making. Based on these insights, this study proposes the Strategic Synthesis Model of the Principal (SSMP) as a conceptual framework that integrates leadership and EHRM into a unified and sustainable model. The proposed model is visually presented in Figure 1.

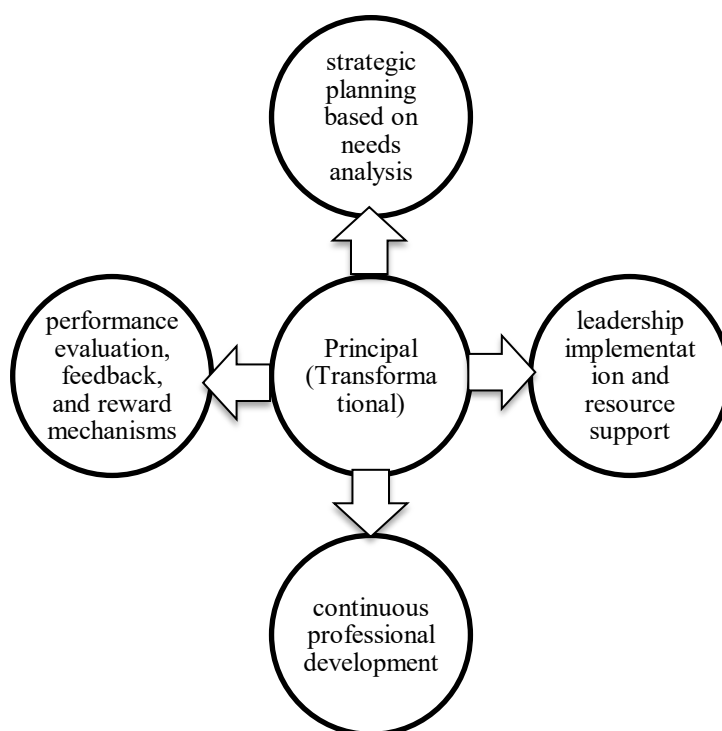


Figure 1. illustrates the Strategic Synthesis Model of the Principal (SSMP)

The first pillar relates to strategic planning and teacher development. The reviewed studies consistently report that principals initiate performance improvement efforts through systematic planning based on teacher competency data. Annual teacher performance evaluations are commonly used to identify gaps between existing competencies and curriculum demands (Wibowo et al., 2022). Based on these findings, principals design professional development programs that are aligned with identified needs. The literature shows that professional development is predominantly conducted through internal and continuous programs, such as lesson study, peer coaching, and in-house training facilitated by senior teachers. These forms of development are repeatedly reported as closely connected to classroom practices and school-specific contexts (Prasojo & Habibi, 2023).

The second pillar concerns leadership implementation and resource support. The analyzed literature highlights that principals play an active role in ensuring that planned development programs are implemented as intended. Principals are reported to be directly involved in supervising, facilitating, and supporting professional development activities (Fadli et al., 2024). In addition, the studies document principals' efforts to allocate school resources, including time, facilities, and technological tools, to support continuous teacher development. Resource allocation is described as an integral component of EHRM implementation that enables professional development activities to be carried out consistently (Kristiawan et al., 2021).

The third pillar focuses on performance evaluation, feedback, and reward mechanisms. The reviewed studies indicate that teacher performance evaluation is conducted on a regular basis and is closely linked to feedback provision. Evaluation

practices are reported to emphasize feedback that informs teachers of areas requiring improvement and supports follow-up development actions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Furthermore, the literature documents the use of both financial and non-financial rewards. Non-financial rewards, such as professional recognition, additional responsibilities, and leadership roles, are frequently reported as outcomes of performance evaluation processes and are associated with sustained teacher engagement and motivation (Putri & Asbari, 2020).

Discussion

The synthesis of the literature findings reinforces and extends the theoretical framework of this study by demonstrating that Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM) strategies are most effective when enacted through transformational leadership. The reviewed studies indicate that principals who integrate needs assessment, internal continuous professional development (CPD), and coaching within their leadership practices achieve stronger outcomes in teacher performance improvement. These findings suggest that effective principals do not merely implement technical human resource mechanisms, but actively embed EHRM within transformational leadership behaviors. When principals are directly involved in mentoring and instructional leadership, they exhibit idealized influence, which strengthens trust and increases teachers' openness to professional change. Moreover, participatory planning processes contribute to inspirational motivation by fostering teachers' sense of ownership and aligning individual professional goals with the school's collective vision (Fadli et al., 2024; Mardianawati et al., 2022).

This study also addresses an important research gap by demonstrating that teacher performance improvement is optimized when EHRM is conceptualized as an integrated and cyclical strategic process rather than as a set of fragmented activities. The synthesized findings indicate that effective EHRM follows a continuous cycle in which strategic planning informs professional development, development is sustained through leadership support, outcomes are examined through formative evaluation, and evaluation generates feedback and rewards that subsequently inform future planning. This integrated cycle reflects core principles of strategic management that emphasize alignment and interdependence among organizational functions to achieve sustainable performance outcomes (David, 2017). The findings further suggest that disruption at any stage of this cycle, such as professional development initiatives that are not followed by meaningful feedback, may reduce the overall impact on teacher performance.

From a practical perspective, the integrated EHRM cycle demonstrates multidimensional effects on teacher performance. The literature synthesis shows that strengthening EHRM contributes not only to improvements in technical aspects of performance, including pedagogical competence, professional expertise, and the application of innovative instructional methods, but also to enhancements in non-technical performance. These include increased organizational commitment, stronger intrinsic motivation, and higher levels of job satisfaction among teachers (Putri & Asbari, 2020). The findings indicate that improvements in non-technical performance are closely linked to fair reward systems and individualized attention

provided by principals through transformational leadership practices, highlighting the importance of balancing evaluation with recognition and support.

Based on the thematic synthesis, this study formulates a Strategic Synthesis Model of the Principal (SSMP) for strengthening Educational Human Resource Management. The SSMP model represents an applied synthesis of the reviewed literature and emphasizes that principals' leadership strategies should be holistic, continuous, and cyclical. Within this framework, teacher development is viewed not as a one-time intervention but as an ongoing institutional process supported by continuous feedback and reflective practice. By integrating transformational leadership with EHRM functions, the SSMP model positions the principal as a central catalyst for sustainable teacher performance improvement and long-term enhancement of school quality.

4. Conclusion

This literature study concludes that teacher performance improvement is most effectively achieved through integrated principal leadership strategies that strengthen Educational Human Resource Management (EHRM). The findings indicate that transformational leadership functions as the primary driving force, while EHRM serves as the operational mechanism that aligns planning, professional development, evaluation, and reward systems. This integration enables schools to systematically enhance not only teachers' technical competencies but also their commitment and professional engagement. Accordingly, this study confirms the effectiveness of a cyclical and integrated Principal Strategic Model (PSM) in strengthening EHRM, positioning the principal as the central driver of sustainable teacher performance improvement and long-term school quality enhancement.

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