

## The Influence of the Principal's Transactional Leadership Style on Student Learning Motivation

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to investigate and find out the impact of the principal's transactional leadership style on the learning motivation of scale participants at SDN 2 Tilung, Parigi Moutong Regency. Although learning motivation is a major factor influencing student learning motivation, transactional leadership emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between leaders and subordinates through incentive and monitoring systems. Surveys were used in the quantitative methodology of this study to collect data. Forty-five students of SDN 2 Tilung, Parigi Moutong Regency, became a sample. Data analysis, including descriptive analysis, classical assembly testing, and hypothesis testing, was performed using SPSS software version 26. The researchers used a t-test to determine whether principals' transactional leadership had an effect on students' learning motivation. The results showed a significance value of 0.001, which < 0.05. By obtaining the consistency of variable Y of 15.710 and the regression coefficient of X of 0.523, this study also used a linear regression analysis test to determine the extent to which the principal's transactional leadership had a positive relationship with student learning motivation. The results showed that students' enthusiasm for learning was positively and significantly influenced by the principal's transactional leadership by 21.6%. These results show that students' enthusiasm for learning is positively and significantly influenced by the principal's transactional leadership.*

**Keywords:** Key Transactional Leadership; Learning Motivation; Quantitative research.

**Abstract:** *Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki dan mengetahui dampak gaya kepemimpinan transaksional kepala sekolah terhadap motivasi belajar peserta skala di SDN 2 Tilung, Kabupaten Parigi Moutong. Meskipun motivasi belajar merupakan faktor utama yang mempengaruhi motivasi belajar siswa, kepemimpinan transaksional menekankan interaksi timbal balik antara pemimpin dan bawahan melalui sistem insentif dan pemantauan. Survei digunakan dalam metodologi kuantitatif penelitian ini untuk mengumpulkan data. Empat puluh lima siswa SDN 2 Tilung, Kabupaten Parigi Moutong, menjadi sampel. Analisis data, termasuk analisis deskriptif, pengujian perakitkan klasik, dan pengujian hipotesis, dilakukan menggunakan perangkat lunak SPSS versi 26. Para peneliti menggunakan uji-t untuk menentukan apakah kepemimpinan transaksional kepala sekolah berpengaruh pada motivasi belajar siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan nilai signifikansi 0,001, yang < 0,05. Dengan memperoleh konsistensi variabel Y sebesar 15,710 dan koefisien regresi X sebesar 0,523, penelitian ini juga menggunakan uji analisis regresi linier untuk mengetahui sejauh mana kepemimpinan transaksional kepala sekolah memiliki hubungan positif dengan motivasi belajar siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa antusiasme belajar siswa dipengaruhi secara positif dan signifikan oleh kepemimpinan transaksional kepala sekolah sebesar 21,6%. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa semangat belajar siswa secara positif dan signifikan dipengaruhi oleh kepemimpinan transaksional kepala sekolah.*

**Kata kunci:** Kepemimpinan Transaksional Utama; Motivasi Belajar; Penelitian kuantitatif.

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## **Introduction**

The main foundation of the development of a country is education. The development of skilled, creative, and globally competitive human resources is determined by high-quality education. The goal of education is to help humans grow and reach their full potential (Dzaky Satria et al., 2025) As an open system, Indonesian education faces a number of difficulties, including external problems related to the interaction of the system with other aspects of society and internal problems such as the low quality of educators and leaders and the scarcity of educational resources (Yekti Handayani & Sukari Sukari, 2024). The level of academic achievement in the school environment is greatly influenced by the leadership of the principal. A key element of education is learning motivation, which affects students' ability to achieve learning goals. Learning motivation is important at the elementary school level because it shapes learning attitudes and habits that will affect the next level of education. Successful principal leadership requires knowledge and the ability to create a conducive learning environment, which in turn encourages positive student learning motivation.

Learning motivation is a state in which students feel compelled to do something (Haris Diandaru, 2021) One of the elements that must be encouraged in educational efforts is learning motivation. Based on the author's findings obtained through direct observation, there are problems at SDN 2 Tilung, Parigi Moutong Regency, such as the number of students who show little enthusiasm and willingness to learn, low motivation to learn, and lack of confidence, so the author is interested in seeing the extent of the influence of the principal's transactional leadership style on students' motivation to learn. Teacher competence, supportive learning environment, infrastructure and facilities, recognition of learning, and transactional leadership of principals are factors that affect learning motivation.

After looking at the problems and variables that affect learning motivation, the author concentrates on how the principal's transactional leadership style affects learning motivation. The level of academic achievement in the school environment is highly determined by the leadership of the principal. Learning motivation is an important element of the educational process that affects student performance in achieving learning goals, (Nur Indah Mufarrohatul A'yun & M Imamul Muttaqin, 2024)

Learning motivation is very important at the elementary level because it forms attitudes and learning habits that will affect the next level of education (Mutiarra et al., 2024) Rewards, engaging activities, and a supportive learning environment can increase motivation to learn (Cahyono et al., 2022) That is why it is so important for

schools to adopt an effective leadership style. This is consistent with the principal's transactional leadership style, which relies primarily on a system of rewards and punishments for subordinates (Fadillah Ramadhani Asiri et al., 2024)

Many previous studies have shown a strong correlation between motivation and transactional leadership. Although conceptually the principal's transactional leadership is proven to affect teachers and staff, the impact still reaches the students, among others, the principal's transactional leadership focuses on reward and supervision so that if this is applied to students it will have a direct impact on their enthusiasm and motivation to learn, then orderly and rules-oriented transactional leadership can create a conducive learning environment so that it becomes a factors that affect Student learning motivation (Tumeko et al., 2025) Research on the influence of principals' transactional leadership styles on students' learning motivation is still rarely researched. Previous research has focused more on teachers or staff, none of which have directly led to students, both of which are interesting to research. Nevertheless, this study adequately evaluates the impact of transactional leadership styles.

According to a previous case study of the transactional and transformational leadership styles of school principals in Yogyakarta, the results show that transformational leadership is more common and successful in educational practices in the Yogyakarta region. Nonetheless, transactional leadership remains important, especially if compliance is required. Honorary professors and civil servants participated in the study (Akhmad et al., 2024) According to the findings of a study on the relationship between principal's transactional leadership and teachers' motivation on teacher performance in public junior high schools in Rasau Jaya Regency, transactional leadership by principals has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance using the same research methodology but with different respondents (Andhika et al., 2024) In addition, the research was conducted at SMA Negeri 6 Palembang (Anugrahani, 2021) found that transactional leadership significantly and profitably influenced teacher motivation. The theoretical topics of this research are learning motivation and transactional leadership. The definition of transactional leadership will be assessed first. Transactional leadership, according to (Fatimatus Zahroh & Isa Anshori, 2024) emphasizes that a leader must ascertain what his subordinates must do to achieve the goal. Transactional leadership is a leadership model that prioritizes communication between leaders and followers, according to (Mubarok et al., 2025) Transactional leaders in the context of education usually reward or punish based on the performance of their followers. Transactional leadership essentially requires a leader to decide what team members need to do to achieve organizational or company goals. This is to motivate subordinates to fulfill their responsibilities. In this case, outstanding students are recognized with certificates and prizes, while non-compliant students are punished. The topic of

learning motivation will be discussed next. Learning motivation, according to (Irma Julita et al., 2025) is a condition in which a person feels compelled to excel in order to achieve a goal. Students must be inspired to learn in order to be motivated to do so. Motivation, according to (Yogi Fernando et al., 2024) is a conscious effort to inspire, direct, and sustain an individual's behavior to motivate them to act and achieve a specific outcome or goal. Motivation, according to (Serliyanti, Muh Ilham, 2024) is a change in one's internal energy that manifests as feelings and actions to achieve a goal. The learning process of each student is greatly influenced by their motivation. Motivated students will be able to improve their academic achievement (Risma Anita Puriani<sup>3</sup>, 2025) Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out whether the transactional leadership style of the principal of SDN 2 Tilung, Parigi Moutong Regency, increases student learning motivation.

### **Methods**

This research was conducted at SDN 2 Tilung, Parigi Moutong Regency, Central Sulawesi, after previously conducting a research trial at SDN 1 Tilung with 30 samples. This study uses a quantitative method to explore the relationship between variables through statistical data analysis. The variables used in this study include the principal's transactional leadership style as an independent variable (X) and students' learning motivation as a bound variable (Y)

The determination of samples in this study uses saturated samples, namely taking all existing samples, after conducting validity and rehabilitation tests on the previous 30 samples where the results are valid and realistic to continue the research. The criteria in the selection of the sample including students in grades IV, V and VI are based on the consideration that students at this level are considered capable of assessing and seeing the picture of the principal's transactional leadership. The sample was 45 respondents from all existing samples, with a total of 13 statement items developed from 3 transactional leadership style indicators that resulted in 6 statements and 5 learning motivation indicators that resulted in 7 statements.

The data analysis techniques used were descriptive analysis and classical assumption tests consisting of normality tests, linearity tests, and hypothesis tests (simple linear regression test, T test and determination coefficient). With this design, it is hoped that a deep understanding of the principal's transactional leadership style and student learning motivation can be obtained.

**Results And Discussion****Results**

## 1. Description analysis

**Table 1.** Data characteristics

Statistics		X	Y
N	Applicable	45	45
	Lost	0	0
Red		22.9111	27.6889
Std. Average Error		.41902	.47121
Median		24.0000	28.0000
Mode		24.00	26.00
Std. Deviation		2.81087	3.16100
Variants		7.901	9.992
Range		9.00	13.00
Minimum		18.00	20.00
Maximum		27.00	33.00
Quantity		1031.00	1246.00
Percentile	10	18.6000	23.0000
	20	20.0000	24.4000
	25	20.0000	26.0000
	30	20.8000	26.0000
	40	22.0000	27.0000
	50	24.0000	28.0000
	60	24.0000	29.0000
	70	24.2000	30.0000
	80	25.8000	31.0000
	90	27.0000	32.0000

Source: SPSS Statistics 26, 2026

The description of the data in this study aims to provide an overview or presentation related to the research that has been conducted. This study requires data obtained from survey respondents, to determine the influence of school leaders on student learning motivation at SDN 2 Tilung, Tomini District, Parigi Moutong Regency. This research has two variables, namely independent variables (transactional leadership) and bound variables (students' motivation to learn).

## 1. Transactional Leadership (X)

Based on the findings of research conducted by researchers on January 19, 2026, 45 students in grades IV, V, and VI filled out a questionnaire. The researchers collected and classified principals' transactional leadership based on these findings,

with the highest X score being 27 and the lowest being 18. According to the study on the principal's leadership score (X), the score range was 18, with the lowest score being 27, while the theoretical score range for the key transactional leadership variable (X) based on the instrument used in the study was 18–27. The mode (MO) is 24, the median (Me) is 24.0, the standard deviation (SD) is 2.81, and the mean (M) is 22.9. These numbers show that more regular data is distributed closer to the mean, median, mode, and standard deviations of each other. The use of descriptive analysis is a standard method in descriptive statistics to classify normally distributed data, this technique refers to the principle of data dissemination and allows the objective grouping of high, medium and low categories based on the characteristics of the research data itself (Risnita et al., 2024) Here is an illustration of how the categories of key leadership variables are distributed:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Low category} &= X (M-SD) < \\ &= X (22,92,81) < - \\ &= X 20.09 < \\ \text{Medium Category} &= (M-SD) < X < (M + SD) \\ &= 20.09 25.71 < X < \\ \text{High category} &= X (M+SD) > \\ &= X 25.71 > \end{aligned}$$

**Table 2.** Variable Tilt Level X

Yes	Shoes	Categories	Frequency	Introduce yourself
1.	X 20.09 <	Low	13	29 %
2.	20,09 -25,71 < X <	Medium	23	51 %
3.	X 25.71 >	Height	9	20 %

The results of the category distribution calculation are shown in the table above. Thirteen respondents, or 29%, were in the low category, twenty-three respondents, or 51%, were in the middle category, and nine respondents, or 20%, were in the high category. Thus, it can be said that the principal in this study has simple transactional leadership. To encourage more learners to progress to the high category, initiatives to increase learning motivation are still needed. This implies that other factors can play a role and that key transactional leadership alone is not enough.

## 2. Student Learning Motivation (Y)

Students (Y) 45 students in grades IV, V, and VI took part in a study on learning motivation on January 19, 2026. The researchers collected and classified information about students' learning achievement based on the findings, with the highest Y score of 33 and the lowest Y score of 20. The average score is 27.6. The

standard deviation was 3.16, the average was 26, and the median was 28.0. The normal distribution of the data is indicated by the mean values, medians, modes, and standard deviations. The variable of student learning achievement (Y) has the following distribution:

Low category =  $X (M-SD) <$

$$= X (27,63,16) < -$$

$$= X 24.5 <$$

Medium Category =  $(M-SD) < X < (M + SD)$

$$= 24.5 30.76 < X <$$

High category =  $X (M+SD) >$

$$= X 30.76 >$$

**Table 3.** Variable Tendency Level Y

Yes	Shoes	Categories	Frequency	Introduce yourself
1.	$X 24.5 <$	Low	9	20 %
2.	$24,5 - 30,76 < X <$	Medium	26	58 %
3.	$X 30.76 >$	Height	10	22%

The results of the category distribution calculation are shown in the table above. There were nine respondents (20%) in the low group, twenty percent in the middle category, twenty-six respondents (58%) in the middle category, and ten respondents (22%) in the high category. Thus, it can be said that the students' learning motivation in this study is in the middle category. Therefore, to motivate more students to advance to the high category, efforts are still needed to increase learning motivation.

## 2. Classic Assumption Test

### a. Data Normality Test

To confirm whether the distribution of data in this study is normal, a normality test is used. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with SPSS 26 was used to test the normality of the principal's transactional leadership questionnaire findings and student learning motivation. Based on interpretation, the data is said to be normally distributed if the significance value or probability of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is  $> 0.05$ , and not distributed normally if the significance or probability value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test  $< 0.05$ . The data normality test yielded the following results:

**Table 4.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test Results

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test One Sample	
Non-Standard Residue	
N	45

Normal Parameters, Red	.0000000
b Std. Deviation	2.79861556
The Most Extreme Absolute	.108
Differences Positive	.075
Negatives	-.108
Test Statistics	.108
Asimpa. Sig. (2 Oaks)	.200c,d

a. The distribution of the test is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Correction of Lilliefors Significance.

d. This is the lower limit of true significance.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show that the data is usually distributed based on the table above. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has a significance value of 0.200, which is higher than 0.05. Thus, it can be said that the overall data on student learning motivation and transactional leadership of school principals is distributed normally.

#### b. Data Linearity Test

The linearity of the regression equation model of variable Y against variable X was examined. The linearity test verifies that there is a linear functional relationship between X and Y in a population, which is necessary for regression analysis. The purpose of the linearity test is to find out if two variables have a significant linear influence. The assessment is based on the following criteria: if the significance value  $< 0.05$ , there is no linear relationship; If  $> 0.05$ , there is a linear relationship.

**Table 5.** Anova Table

ANOVA Table		Number of boxes	Square Average	F	Let's say.
MOTIVASI_BELAJAR *	Antar Grup (Combine d)	148.621	16.513	1.986	.071
KEP_TRANSAKSIONAL	p Lineariti	95.025	95.025	11.428	.002
	Deviations from Linearity	53.595	6.699	.806	.602
	In a Group	291.024	8.315		

Quantity	439.644	4
		5

From the results of the test table above, it is known that the significance value is  $0.602 > 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant linear relationship between principals' transactional leadership variables and students' learning motivation.

### 3. Test Hypothesis

#### a. Simple linear regression test

Positive correlation between learning motivation and the influence of transactional leadership was the main factor in this study using simple linear regression analysis. Data from distributed surveys were used in this study. SPSS 26 is used for the calculation. The results of simple linear regression analysis are presented in the following table.

**Table 6.** Simple Linear Regression Test Results

Coeficin		Non-Standard		Standard	t	Let's
Models		Coefficients		Coefficien		say.
		B	Std.	Beta		
			Error	version		
1	(Constant)	15.71	3.504		4.48	.000
		0			3	
	Kepemimpina	.523	.152	.465	3.44	.001
	n_Transaksion				3	
	al					

a. Dependent Variables: and

From the table above, the result obtained is a constant value (a) of 15.710 while the transactional leadership value (b/regression coefficient) is 0.523. From these results, it can be included in the regression equation as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + bx$$

$$Y = 15.710 + 0.523X$$

The variable of student learning motivation has a consistency value of 15,710, according to the results of the equation, which can be interpreted as a constant of 15,710. The addition of 1% of the principal's transactional leadership score increased students' learning motivation by 0.523, according to the regression coefficient X. Due to the positive regression coefficient, it can be said that the principal's transactional leadership (variable X) had a good impact on students' motivation to learn (variable Y). In addition, the significance values of  $0.001 < 0.05$  in the table above show that

the principal's transactional leadership variable (X) affects the student's learning motivation variable (Y).

#### b. T Test

The t-test is used to show how much influence independent and dependent variables have. A variable is considered to have a significant value on another variable if the significance value (Sig.) < 0.05. The following standards will determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected:

1) If  $t$  is calculated > table  $t$  then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted

2) If  $t$  is calculated < table  $t$  then  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_a$  is rejected

The  $t$ -value of the table with alpha 5% and the number of samples  $n$  minus  $k$  the number of variables used, the table  $t$  is obtained as 2.016.

**Table 7.** T Test Results

Models	Non-Standard Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	t	Let's say.
	B	Std. Error	Beta version		
1 (Constant)	15.710	3.504		4.483	.000
X	.523	.152	.465	3.443	.001

a. Dependent Variables: and

With a significance value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ , the table shows that the  $t$ -value of 3.443 is higher than the  $t$ -value of the table of 2.016. Since the calculated  $t$ -value is higher than the table's  $t$ -value and the significance value < 0.05, it can be stated that the principal's transactional leadership has a positive and significant impact on students' motivation in learning, so it can be concluded that  $H_a$  is accepted while  $H_0$  is rejected.

The presentation of the results in tables 6 and 7 is part of a complete set of regression analysis procedures, but the difference is that in the simple linear regression test table it shows how much variation the motivation explained by the leader while in table 7 (the T test) it confirms that the effect is proven to be statistically significant. The two tables complement each other where one table answers how big and the other table is significant. So that the results obtained become a complete understanding of the relationship between the variables being studied.

### c. Determination coefficient

The determination coefficient (KD) is used in statistical calculations to ascertain the extent to which students' learning motivation (Y) is influenced by the principal's leadership (X).

**Table 8.** Determination Coefficient Test Results

Model Summary				
Mod els	R	R Square	Customize d R Box	Std. Estimation Error
1	.465a	.216	.198	2.83097

The correlation value (R) is 0.465, according to the results in the Table, It results in a determination coefficient (R Squared) of 0.216, which means that the dependent variable (learners' learning motivation) is influenced by 21.6% by the independent variable (the principal's transactional leadership).

### Discussion

The results of this researcher show that students' learning motivation is positively and significantly influenced by the transactional leadership of the principal at SDN 2 Tilung, Tomini District, Parigi Moutong Regency. The three key indicators of contingent reward, active expression management, and passive expression management show that the principal's transactional leadership style has a favorable and significant impact on students' learning motivation. Learners' enthusiasm and drive to succeed are directly influenced by contingency rewards, which are explicit promises and incentives related to the achievement of learning objectives. Meanwhile, active expression management ensures that educational goals are achieved by observing the learning process regularly, detecting problems early, and taking corrective actions. As a result, students become more aware of the importance of learning motivation.

In transactional leadership, passive expression management works by only intervening when problems arise or goals are not achieved (Harun & Masrufa, 2023). It can teach learners important lessons about their assignments and the consequences of their actions. This is in line with research (Putri et al., 2025) It reveals the positive and significant influence of transactional leadership, which emphasizes reciprocal relationships through a system of incentives and supervision. The education management system used in schools has a significant impact on students, especially elementary school students, who are still developing their academic abilities (Ayumi & Nasution, 2025). According to research (Akhmad et al., 2024) Leaders are not only responsible for administrative management but also have an impact on the direction of educational goals, including students' motivation to learn,

this is in line with the findings of this study where the principal's transactional leadership style has a significant impact on students' motivation to learn.

In this context, learning motivation includes motivation to achieve, learning opportunities, learning rewards, learning infrastructure and facilities, and a supportive learning environment. Efforts to increase learning motivation will not be maximized if the principal does not succeed in implementing a transactional leadership style, for example by failing to provide clear teaching, implementing an unfair reward system, or failing to monitor learning problems in schools.

The findings of the study showed that the influence of the principal's transactional leadership on students' learning motivation was 21.6%. The variable contribution rate of 21.6% is a large enough number and it is useful to see that students' learning motivation is influenced by many much larger factors, if only one factor, namely the principal's transactional leadership style which is able to explain around 21.6%, it means that the principal's leadership is one of the main determining factors that can be regulated by educational institutions and how schools through their dreamers manage the learning process. In addition, the results also answer the initial theory that transactional leadership styles are not only for teachers or staff, but transactional leadership also has a positive and significant influence on students' learning motivation, and after statistical data analysis can prove that transactional leadership styles are relevant to students' learning motivation. According to research (Anugrahani, 2021) 24% of people are motivated to learn, with the influence of the principal's leadership. According to research (Wahyuni & Desriyandri, 2022) Learning motivation comes from the principal's leadership and other factors, these factors can include parental support and attractive programs, teacher competence, and a conducive learning environment to increase students' motivation to learn, where in this study it was also found that learning motivation is not only influenced by the principal's transactional leadership, but also by other factors.

The implications of these findings see how important it is to involve everyone in maximizing principals' transactional leadership to increase motivation to learn. Principals should create a school culture that emphasizes the achievement of learning objectives and encourages the development of each learner, strengthens the implementation of a clear reward system through academic recognition programs, and improves guidance and counseling services to support students with difficulties. In addition, teachers are required to cooperate in setting uniform standards and sanctions in the classroom and be more proactive in informing the principal about the progress of their students. It is important to let learners know that their enthusiasm and motivation for learning will be well recognized and that they can get the help they need to overcome obstacles in the classroom.

## Conclusion

The results of the study showed that at SDN 2 Tilung in Parigi Moutong Regency, the transactional leadership style had a significant and positive influence on students' enthusiasm for learning. It was found that the application of principles such as achievement awarding, emphasis on clear rules and direct supervision was able to encourage students' enthusiasm and involvement in the learning process. It can be seen that the R-squared value is 0.216 which means that the influence of the independent variable has a 21% impact on the dependent variable. This research is an important finding that has not been explained in detail in the context of the application of the school environment where the research is located, where the reciprocal relationship between leaders and students is the main key in building positive learning motivation.

Scientifically, the results of this study confirm the previous view that the principal's transactional leadership style plays an important role in the educational environment, but it also adds a new perspective, namely that the effectiveness of this leadership style is highly dependent on the way the principal balances the approach of giving and education. This research also enriches the concept of leadership and motivational relationships by showing that the impact is not only administrative, but also touches on the psychological aspects of students and offers an analytical method that focuses more on direct interaction in learning.

While it provides valuable insights, the study has some limitations, such as limited sample use, only elementary school-level research, and a focus on a single location with specific characteristics. In addition, this study does not distinguish the impact of data collection methods that can be further developed. Therefore, further research involving a larger sample and the application of more in-depth methods is needed, so that understanding the influence of transactional leadership on school leaders is more targeted and effective.

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