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# The Impact of Women's Leadership Style on Teacher Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in Junior High Schools

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## **ABSTRACT**

Received: 28 Dec 2024 Revised: 18 Feb 2025 Accepted: 26 Feb 2025 Leadership in education plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance, which ultimately impacts the effectiveness of the learning process. This research analyzes the influence of women's leadership on teacher performance in Junior High Schools in Klari District, Karawang, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This quantitative research investigates the influence of women's leadership on teacher performance in junior high schools in Klari District, Karawang, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. A total of 103 respondents, comprising teachers led by female school principals, participated in the survey. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which is suitable for small sample sizes and complex variable relationships. The findings indicate that women's leadership significantly influences job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.679$ , p < 0.001) and directly affects teacher performance ( $\beta =$ 0.387, p = 0.012). Furthermore, job satisfaction has a significant impact on performance ( $\beta$  = 0.505, p = 0.001) and mediates the relationship between leadership and performance ( $\beta$  = 0.343, p = 0.003). These results highlight the importance of democratic, communicative, and supportive leadership styles in fostering a positive work environment and improving teacher outcomes. The research recommends increasing the representation of women in educational leadership and implementing supportive policies to enhance teacher well-being and performance.

**Keywords:** women's leadership, teacher performance, job satisfaction, education, junior high school.

#### INTRODUCTION

Organizations play a crucial role in achieving goals that cannot be accomplished individually. As a platform for individuals working together, an organization requires high-quality Human Resources (HR) to function optimally. According to Jones (2021), organizations enable individuals to reach common goals that would be unattainable on their own. In this context, HR serves as the primary driving force of an organization and is considered an asset that must be developed to maximize its contribution. Effective HR management enhances organizational efficiency and ensures that established objectives are achieved more effectively (Darmadi, 2022). Leadership plays a vital role in optimizing employee performance. The application of effective leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, has been proven to increase employee motivation, commitment, and performance outcome (Saputra & Wahyuningtyas, 2021).

In the field of education, teacher performance is one of the key factors in determining the success of the teaching and learning process. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering lessons but also for guiding students to achieve optimal learning outcomes (Muspawi, 2021). High-performing teachers can create an effective learning environment, boost student motivation, and ensure that each student receives a quality education. Evaluating teacher performance

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is essential to maintaining educational standards and ensuring they remain aligned with evolving needs and developments (Zakiyudin, 2020). Dudija et al. (2024) define performance as the result of a process that is referenced and evaluated over a certain period based on established regulations, standards, or agreements.

However, in Karawang Regency, disparities in teacher performance remain a significant challenge in efforts to improve education quality. According to the 2022 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Karawang Regency, the primary issue in the education sector is the low quality of teaching staff, which contributes to high dropout rates. Economic factors, low student motivation, and insufficient support from educators are the main causes of this issue (Ervianni, 2022). Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2022) indicate that the average length of schooling in Karawang is only 7.96 years, meaning that many students do not complete their junior high school education. Therefore, improving teacher performance is one of the key solutions to bridging this gap and advancing education quality in the region. The leadership style of school principals significantly influences teacher performance. As routine tasks are delegated, leadership increasingly demands emotional intelligence, effective communication, and collaboration skills to build a supportive work environment (Budianto et al., 2025).

As Sirait & Sary (2024) have put it, effective leadership entails building relationships and collaboration, having effective performance, practicing participative leadership, and delegating time, responsibilities, and authority. Research has revealed that women's leadership is generally democratic, empathetic, and collaborative as compared to the male leadership (Patimah & Oktaviani, 2022). The school ladies principals lay more emphasis on teacher well being where they encourage and create good working relationships with the teachers hence enhancing their motivation and performance. A research by INOVASI (2018) found that 84% of teachers reported higher job satisfaction under women's leadership, compared to 74% under male leadership. This suggests that women's leadership styles are more effective in creating a positive work environment, ultimately leading to better teacher performance and improved educational outcomes.

Beyond leadership, another crucial factor affecting teacher performance is job satisfaction. Studies conducted by Widayanti & Widiastini (2021) and Paparang et al. (2021) indicate that job satisfaction has a significant impact on employee performance. Key determinants of job satisfaction include salary, work environment, and relationships with supervisors and colleagues. Moreover, job satisfaction can serve as a mediating variable between leadership and performance, as demonstrated in the research by Marbun & Jufrizen (2022). If teachers are not uncomfortable or not at all comfortable to what they are doing in such positions, then they are likely to want to teach them and actualize the best outputs in their students. Job satisfaction is also considered a crucial indicator of an organisation's health related to its human resources, as it reflects employees' emotional response and commitment toward their work (Prasetio et al., 2020).

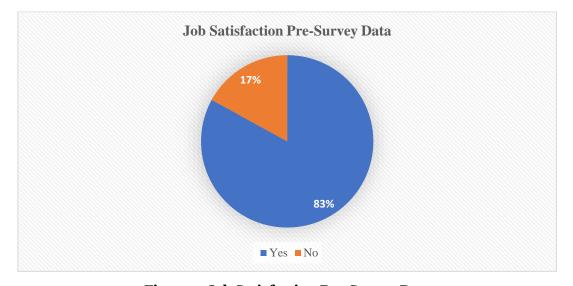


Figure 1. Job Satisfaction Pre-Survey Data

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Findings from a pre-survey distributed to 35 teachers in Klari District, Karawang further reinforce the importance of leadership in enhancing teacher performance. The results show that 100% of teachers found their work challenging, while 94.3% considered it engaging. As far as promotions are concerned, 85.7% of teachers were of the view their promotions were consistent with their areas of expertise, and 88.6% of them were of the view that their promotions were based on their performance. In regards to leadership, 91.4% of teachers were motivated by the superiors but only 80% reported that their supervisors always monitored their work. Such findings show that the leadership of women in Klari District has proved effective in raising teacher job satisfaction as part of enhancing quality of education in the region.

Given the various factors influencing teacher performance, particularly school leadership styles and job satisfaction levels, it is essential to implement more effective strategies to enhance the quality of educators. The kind of women leadership that is emphatic and supportive has been adopted in order to facilitate teachers' efficiency in teaching students through making school environment conducive for them. Thus, hiring more women school principals and adopting policies that support women's leadership may be the prudent move in improving quality of education in Karawang Regency.

While studies of the past indicated that the leadership style can be important to teacher motivation and instructional quality, recent research conveys that the leadership style contributes greatly to teacher motivation and instructional quality (Tamayo, 2024; Zakiyudin, 2020). While numerous studies have examined general leadership impacts, fewer have focused specifically on Women's leadership a growing but under-researched domain in Indonesian educational contexts. Women leaders tend to possess distinct attributes like compassion and teamwork; emotional intelligence that can also promote the engagement of teachers and the culture of institutions (Fauzi et al., 2020; Hasnawati et al., 2021). However, cultural norms, patriarchy structures, and the lack of their leadership positions have historically limited their impact and made empirical study in this area timely and important (Ghundol & Muthanna, 2025).

Global attention has also been brought forth regarding the significance of women's leadership in education, notably when research connects it with higher EI (Asmamaw & Semela, 2023), a better communication climate and more supportive work environments (Laguna-Sánchez et al., 2021). However, in Indonesia, empirical research on how women school leader's impact teacher performance through psychosocial mechanisms such as job satisfaction is still limited. This margin calls for a delicate understanding of the effects of- gendered styles of- leadership towards the workplace environment in schools especially in places where education sector is struggling.

As a theory, this research is based on Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), that focuses on idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration – characteristics commonly attributed to competent women leaders. It also draws from Servant Leadership Theory (Greenleaf, 1977), which aligns with the nurturing and community-oriented leadership style often seen among female school principals. Furthermore, Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971) offers a complementary framework, explaining how leaders adapt their behavior to meet the needs of subordinates, which resonates with the adaptive strategies employed by women leaders to foster job satisfaction and performance.

By integrating these theoretical lenses, the research aims to examine how women's leadership styles influence teacher performance, directly and indirectly, through the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the context of junior high schools in Klari District, Karawang.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1. What are the characteristics of women's leadership styles in Junior High Schools (SMP) in Klari District, Karawang?
- 2. How is the teacher performance in Junior High Schools (SMP) in Klari District, Karawang?
- 3. How is the level of job satisfaction in Junior High Schools (SMP) in Klari District, Karawang?
- 4. To what extent does women's leadership style influence employee performance in Junior High Schools (SMP) in Klari District, Karawang?

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- 5. To what extent does job satisfaction influence employee performance in Junior High Schools (SMP) in Klari District, Karawang?
- 6. To what extent does women's leadership style affect teacher performance through job satisfaction as a mediating variable in Junior High Schools (SMP) in Karawang Regency?

#### **METHODS**

This research employed a descriptive quantitative research design with a survey approach, aiming to objectively describe the relationship between women's leadership style, job satisfaction, and teacher performance. The research is grounded in positivist philosophy, emphasizing measurable and observable phenomena to uncover causal relationships. (Santoso & Indrajaya, 2023)

## 3.1 Instrument Development

The questionnaire used in this research was adapted from previously validated instruments. The leadership style and job satisfaction scales were adapted from established models including Bass and Avolio's Transformational Leadership Inventory and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, respectively (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Weiss et al., 1967). Prior to full deployment, the questionnaire underwent expert validation by education and leadership scholars and was pilot-tested on a small sample to ensure clarity and reliability. Reliability and validity were confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) and convergent validity measures using Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.5).

## 3.1.1 Operational Variables

To ensure clarity and consistency in measurement, the operational definitions of the variables used in this study are summarized in the table below. Each of the variables is provided with its indicators, scale of measurement, and source of adaptation.

**Table 1. Operational Variables** 

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
	Educational Competence	Creating a vibrant, challenging, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment  Reviewing developments in teaching, learning, curriculum, and assessment knowledge
	Personal Competence	Emotional maturity  Being patient, persistent, and determined
Women's Leadership Style	Relational Competence	Creating a dynamic and supportive work environment where people collaborate and care for each other
Kurniawan, A.		Effectively managing and solving problems
(2020)	Intellectual Competence	Future-oriented and able to influence beneficial changes for the school
		Creating a constructive, innovative, and dynamic organizational culture committed to learning
		Planning, evaluating, achieving, and reporting performance outcomes
	Organizational Competence	Developing, implementing, and monitoring planning, management, and reporting systems effectively and accountably

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	Planning the Learning Process	Learning objectives		
	Flamming the Learning Flocess	Learning methods and techniques		
		Teaching principles		
	Total and a discalar	Use of teaching aids		
	Implementing and Leading the Learning Process	Skills in assessing student learning outcomes		
		Skills in selecting and applying teaching strategies or approaches		
		Communication with students		
Teacher	Communication Skills	Communication with colleagues and staff		
Performance		Communication with superiors		
Kurniawan, A.	Ain- Iin- Dr	Illuminative-observative assessment		
(2020)	Assessing Learning Progress	Structural-objective assessment		
		Characteristics of teachers and students		
		Learning materials		
	Mastery of Learning Materials	Quality policies in place		
		Available resources		
		High achievement expectations		
		Focus on stakeholders (especially students)		
		Management input		
	Enrichment Implementation	Ability to provide enrichment activities		
	The Work Itself	Matching skills		
		Job aligns with interests		
		Satisfaction level with the job		
	a.1	Appropriate salary level		
	Salary	Satisfaction with received salary		
		Promotion system management		
Job Satisfaction	Promotion	Skills align with promotional positions		
Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. (2019)		Career development opportunities		
ouuge, 1. (2019)	G	Provides direction to subordinates		
	Supervisor	Provides guidance to subordinates		
	a 11	Relationships with coworkers		
	Colleagues	Supportive colleagues		
		Satisfaction with the work environment		
	Work Environment	Work facilities meet needs		
	1			

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## 3.2 Sample and Data Collection

All teachers working under the principals of females in junior high schools in Klari District Karawang had constituted the research population. We used a saturated sampling technique yielding total respondents who were 103. The data were gathered through administered structured questionnaires that were distributed in person and online, during a period of two weeks.

## 3.3 Data Analysis Using SEM-PLS

The data analysis was conducted by employing Structural Equation Modeling—Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) that was selected due to its capability of modelling complex associations and adapting to smaller and medium size samples. SEM-PLS was carried out using SmartPLS Application v. 4.0 that is compatible with bootstrapping procedures and robust path modeling. Composite Reliability (CR), AVE, and Discriminant Validity were used in evaluating the measurement model. The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, significance levels (p-values), R<sup>2</sup>; and predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>).

This approach to methods helped to make a thorough evaluation of the direct and indirect effects between the variables under study, specifically the mediating role of job satisfaction between women's leadership and teacher performance.

#### **RESULTS**

## 4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

The validity of measurement was analysed using the outer loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as well as discriminant validity informed by the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Table 2. Outer Loadings of Measurement Items

Construct	Indicator	Loading
Women Leadership Style	WLS1-WLS5	> 0.70
Job Satisfaction	JS1-JS4	> 0.70
Teacher Performance	TP1-TP4	> 0.70

Table 3. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	CR	AVE
Women Leadership Style	0.89	0.68
Job Satisfaction	0.91	0.71
Teacher Performance	0.88	0.66

All constructs met the criteria of CR > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5, confirming internal consistency and convergent validity.

**Table 4. Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratios)** 

Constructs	HTMT Value
Women Leadership – Job Satisfaction	0.61
Women Leadership – Performance	0.54
Job Satisfaction – Performance	0.63

HTMT values below 0.85 confirmed sufficient discriminant validity between constructs.

#### **4.2 Descriptive Results**

The research involved 103 teachers from five junior high schools in Klari District, Karawang. Demographic data revealed that 68.9% of respondents were women, with most teachers aged 31–50 years and holding at least a bachelor's degree (67%). Most teachers had 4–6 years of teaching experience.

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The mean scores across constructs were high:

• Women Leadership Style: 78.32%

• Job Satisfaction: 78.25%

• Teacher Performance: 77.92%

These scores suggest that respondents perceived their leaders positively, were satisfied with their jobs, and demonstrated a high level of performance.

## 4.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method (5000 samples) yielded the following results:

Table 5. Path Coefficients and Significance (Direct and Indirect Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-	p-
			value	value
H1: WLS → Job Satisfaction	Significant	0.679	11.245	<0.001
H2: WLS → Teacher Performance	Significant	0.387	2.542	0.012
H3: Job Satisfaction → Teacher Performance	Significant	0.505	6.831	< 0.001
H4: WLS → Job Satisfaction → Performance	Significant (Indirect	0.343	2.973	0.003
(Mediated)	Effect)			

The model explains a substantial amount of variance in the endogenous constructs:

R<sup>2</sup> for Job Satisfaction: 0.462
R<sup>2</sup> for Teacher Performance: 0.671

• Predictive relevance (Q2) also supports the model's robustness:

Q² for Job Satisfaction: 0.259
Q² for Teacher Performance: 0.389

These results indicate moderate to strong explanatory power and good predictive capability.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (/O/STDEV/)	P values
Women's Leadership Style -> Job Satisfaction	0.679	0.686	0.102	6.662	0
Women's Leadership Style -> Teacher Performance	0.387	0.396	0.155	2.501	0.012
Job Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.505	0.5	0.157	3.221	0.001

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (/O/STDEV/)	P values
Women's Leadership Style - Job Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.343	0.339	0.114	2.999	0.003

Figure 2. Hypothesis testing results

The hypothesis testing results confirmed that all four hypotheses were supported. With the condition that all p-values are below 0.05 and the beta coefficients indicate positive relationships, it can be concluded that women's leadership positively and significantly influences job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.679$ , p < 0.001) and has a direct effect on teacher

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performance ( $\beta$  = 0.387, p = 0.012). Additionally, job satisfaction significantly affects teacher performance ( $\beta$  = 0.505, p = 0.001). Moreover, job satisfaction mediates the relationship between women's leadership and teacher performance ( $\beta$  = 0.343, p = 0.003), indicating that effective leadership not only has a direct impact but also an indirect effect through increased job satisfaction.

	R square	R square adjusted
Job Satisfaction	0.462	0.456
Teacher Performance	0.671	0.665

	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1- SSE/SSO)
Job satisfaction	2060	1526.267	0.259
Teacher Performance	2266	1383.732	0.389

Figure 3. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis further supports these findings. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) shows that job satisfaction (0.462) and teacher performance (0.671) fall within the moderate to strong influence range, indicating that independent variables have a substantial impact. The predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) values of job satisfaction (0.259) and teacher performance (0.389) indicate that the model has a good predictive power. Finally, validity and reliability tests show that all variables have passed the criteria of convergent validity (AVE > 0.5) and internal reliability (CR > 0.7), which allows talking about the robustness of the measurement model.

These results highlight the significant role of female leadership in shaping job satisfaction and teacher performance, reinforcing the importance of supportive and empowering leadership in the education sector.

#### **DISCUSSION**

This research was conducted with the aim of finding out whether women's leadership styles have any impact on junior high schools teacher performance in Klari District, Karawang having a job satisfaction as a mediating variable. What emerged from the use of Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) on a sample of 103 teachers were both direct and indirect effects describing important dynamics in educational establishments headed by female principals.

## 5.1. Novel Contributions to Literature

Although a number of studies have reported that leadership styles have an outcome on teachers (Hasnawati et al., 2021; (Fauzi et al., 2020), this study adds new perspectives, as it explores in greater detail the issue of women's leadership in the Indonesian junior high school setting (a rather under explored field). Previously conducted studies tend to generalize leadership effects, without disaggregating them by gender, or cultural setting. That gap is filled by this research because it focuses on how feminine leadership characteristics like empathy, cooperation, and communication can be translated into tangible increases in levels of job satisfaction and performance.

Furthermore, from the findings it can be seen that job satisfaction is not only the direct consequence of leadership style but an important one as a mediating variable in promoting teacher performance. This dual role is rarely explored with empirical rigor in the Southeast Asian education context. Thus, the research provides new empirical evidence

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on how leadership rooted in transformational and servant leadership principles (e.g., supportiveness, inspiration, and care) operates through psychological variables like job satisfaction to elevate institutional performance.

## 5.2. Integration with Existing Research

The results affirm the established relationship between transformational leadership and organizational outcomes. Specifically, the strong effect of women's leadership on job satisfaction ( $\beta$  = 0.679) aligns with Bass & Avolio's (1994) framework of transformational leadership, which posits that supportive and inspiring leaders foster intrinsic motivation. Similarly, the mediation of job satisfaction supports Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where intrinsic factors like recognition, relationships, and professional growth lead to enhanced performance (Marbun & Jufrizen, 2022).

Comparatively, the results mirror international findings such as those by Laguna-Sánchez et al. (2021) and Asmamaw & Semela (2023), which show that emotionally intelligent and collaborative female leadership improves institutional culture and productivity. However, unlike those studies based in Europe and Africa, this research provides localized evidence from Indonesia, enhancing contextual applicability.

## 5.3. Policy Implications

The findings have significant implications for educational policy in Indonesia and similar developing nations:

- Strengthen gender-inclusive leadership pipelines: Given the positive effect of female leadership on teacher outcomes, education ministries and local governments should actively promote the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women into principal roles. Leadership development programs have to be gender sensitive and culturally contextualized.
- 2) Institutionalize job satisfaction metrics: Schools and district offices should include job satisfaction indicators in teacher performance appraisals, using them as early warning signals for burnout or disengagement.
- 3) Leadership training reforms: The training of principals needs to include training on soft skills, i.e., empathy, communication and emotional intelligence in addition to technical competencies. These attributes are in the heart of leadership and they can bring systemic changes in the morale and performance of teachers.

## 5.4. Managerial Implications

From a managerial standpoint, the findings emphasize the need to:

- 1) Foster participatory decision-making: Female researchers' leaders were associated with democratic styles that promote feedback and cooperation. The school leaders should follow that example by involving teachers in planning and evaluation processes to increase the degrees of ownership and satisfaction.
- 2) Create supportive work environments: Psychosocial support systems, such as mentoring, recognition and flexible scheduling, should receive priority among school managers, most especially during high stress academic times.
- 3) Monitor indirect performance drivers: Most of the time, performance is perceived by exam scores or classroom observation. That is, the presented research explains that subjective variables such as satisfaction are core antecedents of those results and need to be tracked often.

#### 5.5. Theoretical Implications

In theory, this study enhances the argument for incorporating Transformational Leadership Theory and Servant Leadership Theory into educational management models but particularly in the context of culture diversity and developing countries. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of mediating psychological constructs, like job satisfaction, in explaining leadership-performance relationships.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This research explored the influence of women's leadership style on teacher performance in junior high schools in Klari District, Karawang, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Through the application of Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) on data gathered from 103 teachers, the findings demonstrated that women's leadership has both a direct and indirect effect on teacher performance. Specifically, the democratic, communicative, and supportive leadership approaches commonly adopted by women leaders were found to

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significantly increase job satisfaction among teachers, which in turn improved their performance in key areas such as lesson planning, delivery, and evaluation. Such results highlight the importance of emotional intelligence and collaborative leadership in producing a favorable learning environment..

Practically, this study provides useful suggestions to education authorities. Firstly, there is a need to nurture gender-inclusive leadership development programs that can drive women's development to school leadership positions. Not only the managerial skills but also the emotional and relational competencies should dominate these programs. Second, teacher job satisfaction should be monitored regularly as a core indicator of school performance, allowing for early intervention where morale is low. Third, soft skills of participatory leadership, conflict resolution, and motivation strategies should be integrated into the principal certification and training programs. Last but not least, mentorship programs connecting experienced female school heads with other leaders could augment the leadership pipeline and institutional resilience as welle.

Future research should aim to extend this research by incorporating longitudinal designs to observe how leadership styles impact job satisfaction and teacher performance over time. Apart from this, one can further use research on private schools or extend the research on different levels of education for the purpose of generalizability of research results. Comparative studies across districts or regions could also offer insights into how cultural, economic, or institutional differences influence the effectiveness of women's leadership. Furthermore, qualitative interviews may combine with quantitative data in mixed-method studies to produce a more complex understanding of how the leadership dynamics operate in a range of educational places. Overall, this research does not only enrich the theoretical pool of the educational leadership bodies of literature but adds practical recommendations to construct more inclusive and efficient school leadership frames.

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