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Principal Leadership Management In Addressing Teacher Work Stress At SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the principal's leadership management in addressing teacher work-related stress at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong. The research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. Primary data sources include the principal and teachers at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong, while secondary data sources consist of school documents and relevant literature. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis followed a qualitative descriptive approach, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the principal addresses teacher work-related stress through several strategies: fostering open and supportive communication, providing emotional and professional support, delegating tasks proportionally, creating a conducive and comfortable work environment, and facilitating ongoing teacher well-being programs. According to the informants, these strategies have led to a reduction in teacher work-related stress, an increase in motivation, productivity, and commitment, and the creation of a harmonious and conducive school climate. These outcomes were assessed through the triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation, rather than through psychometric stress measurements. Challenges in implementation—such as the diverse needs of teachers, the principal's limited time, and budgetary constraints—are addressed through peer counseling, the delegation of mentoring responsibilities, and the utilization of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds and external partnerships.*

Keywords**:** *Leadership Management, School Principal, Teacher Work Stress, Islamic Educational Management*

Introduction

Teacher occupational stress is a serious issue that is increasingly gaining attention in modern education.[1] A scoping review of international research has gathered evidence regarding stress, emotional exhaustion (burnout), anxiety, and depression among teachers.[2] Pressures stemming from various sources—such as excessive administrative workloads,

[1] N. Nofitasari dkk., "Kesehatan Mental Guru dalam Dinamika Lingkungan Kerja dan Manajemen Stres," *Dawuh Guru: Jurnal Pendidikan MI/SD* 5, no. 2 (2025): 227–242, https://doi.org/10.35878/guru.v5i2.1685.

[2] B. Agyapong dkk., "Stress, Burnout, Anxiety and Depression among Teachers: A Scoping Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 17 (2022): 10706, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710706.

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constantly evolving curriculum demands, and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships within the school environment—are primary contributors to teacher stress. A literature review of numerous international articles identifies administrative demands and relationships with stakeholders as prominent extrinsic factors, alongside intrinsic factors such as self-efficacy.[3] Systematic research synthesis concerning workload, work intensification, and "time poverty" among teachers and school leaders further indicates that an increasing workload is commonly linked to stress, exhaustion, burnout, and even the departure of teachers from the profession.[4] If left unaddressed, this situation negatively impacts both the quality of instruction and teacher well-being; systematic reviews of outcomes related to teacher well-being suggest that this issue warrants serious attention from school administrators.

School leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a work environment that is conducive to and supportive of teachers' psychological well-being. A school principal acts not merely as an institutional administrator, but as a leader capable of identifying and responding to the emotional and professional needs of their staff.[5] Longitudinal studies indicate that the support teachers perceive from their principal is a predictor of their motivation and well-being. [6]

Quantitative evidence from China demonstrates that transformational leadership by principals reduces teachers' role-related stress—both directly and through the mediating effects of affective commitment and job satisfaction—[7] while instructional leadership is linked to teacher retention through a chain of mediation involving role-related stress and affective commitment.[8] Consequently, a principal's ability to manage organizational

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[3] Rachmat Satria dan Fauzan Fauzan, "Analisis Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Stres Kerja terhadap Kinerja Guru: Studi Literatur Komprehensif," *Jurnal Riset dan Inovasi Pembelajaran* 5, no. 1 (2025): 249–263, https://doi.org/10.51574/jrip.v5i1.2889.

[4] Sue Creagh dkk., "Workload, Work Intensification and Time Poverty for Teachers and School Leaders: A Systematic Research Synthesis," *Educational Review*, diterbitkan daring 24 April 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2023.2196607.

[5] Khairul Amri Silalahi dan Syafri Fadillah Marpaung, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah dalam Mengurangi Stres Kerja Guru: Studi Kasus di SMK," *JDMP (Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen Pendidikan)* 9, no. 2 (2025): 230–244, https://doi.org/10.26740/jdmp.v9n2.p230-244.

[6] V. Cece dkk., "The Predictive Role of Perceived Support from Principals and Professional Identity on Teachers' Motivation and Well-Being: A Longitudinal Study," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 11 (2022): 6674, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116674.

[7] Ping Yong dan Junhui Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress: Dual Mediation of Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction," *Frontiers in Psychology* 16 (2025): 1634303, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1634303.

[8] Q. Zhan, X. Wang, dan H. Song, "The Relationship between Principals' Instructional Leadership and Teacher Retention in the Undeveloped Regions of Central and Western China: The Chain-Mediating Role of Role Stress and Affective

dynamics in a humanistic and effective manner serves as a key determinant of the stress experienced by teachers.

From the perspective of Islamic education, leadership possesses a strong theological foundation. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) affirmed that every individual is a leader and will be held accountable for their leadership (narrated by al-Bukhari, no. 893, and Muslim, no. 1829). This principle implies that a school principal has a duty to attend to and facilitate the needs of teachers, enabling them to perform their duties optimally—including the management of work-related stress.

In the field, teachers often face challenges when support from school leadership is inadequate. Uneven workloads, a lack of appreciation for performance, and ineffective communication between the principal and teachers are factors that can exacerbate this situation. SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong, a public junior high school in Rejang Lebong Regency, is not exempt from these issues. An initial survey conducted by the researcher on February 20, 2026, revealed that teachers' primary concerns centered on two areas: excessive workloads and administrative tasks, as well as student behavior and discipline. These preliminary findings highlight the need to examine how principals exercise leadership to address teacher work stress. It should be noted that, in this study, work stress is not measured psychometrically. Instead, it is identified through teachers' complaints in the initial survey and observable changes in their work behavior—such as increased irritability, reduced concentration, withdrawal, tardiness, and absenteeism. Consequently, work stress is understood here as a set of reported and observed symptoms, rather than a quantifiable stress level.

Several previous studies have explored related topics. Yong and Zhang conducted a quantitative analysis of 433 teachers in China, finding that a principal's transformational leadership reduces teachers' role stress—both directly and indirectly—by fostering affective commitment and job satisfaction, based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory.[9] Tsang et al. reported that transformational leadership is linked to a reduction in teacher burnout through psychological empowerment.[10] In Indonesia, Marwani et al. conducted a qualitative case study at a private integrated Islamic junior high school, examining how the four dimensions of transformational leadership help address teacher burnout; [11] Silalahi and Marpaung investigated the role

Commitment," *Behavioral Sciences* 13, no. 9 (2023): 738, https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13090738.

[9] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[10] K. K. Tsang, Y. Du, dan Y. Teng, "Transformational Leadership, Teacher Burnout, and Psychological Empowerment: A Mediation Analysis," *Social Behavior and Personality* 50 (2022): e11041, https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.11041.

[11] Marwani, Windi Megayanti, dan Mohd Faeez Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience: Transformational Leadership as a Protective Factor Against Burnout," *Al-*

of principals' transformational leadership in mitigating teacher work stress through a case study at a vocational high school (SMK);[12] meanwhile, Nofitasari et al. ... examining the mental health of teachers in relation to their work environment and stress management at the elementary school (SD/MI) level.[13]

The literature review reveals three research gaps. First, the international studies examined above generally test the relationships between variables quantitatively and focus on specific leadership styles—such as transformational leadership. Yong and Zhang, in particular, note that empirical evidence regarding how school leadership mitigates role stress through psychological mechanisms remains limited.[14] There is a lack of research detailing how leadership functions as a managerial process—encompassing planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising—within the daily operations of a school. Second, while some studies in Indonesia address teacher burnout or performance,[15] [16] few utilize Islamic values as an operational framework to interpret how school principals manage teacher stress. Third, research on school principal management in Rejang Lebong Regency—such as Pratiwi's study at a *madrasah aliyah* (Islamic senior high school)—focuses on teacher professionalism rather than teacher work-related stress.[17]

Based on the author's research, the novelty of this study lies in three aspects: (1) positioning the principal's leadership as a managerial process broken down into operational strategies for managing teacher stress; (2) integrating Conservation of Resources (COR) theory with Islamic values as a framework for interpreting the findings; and (3) uncovering implementation challenges and the corresponding adaptive strategies within the context of public junior high schools (SMP) in Rejang Lebong. This study aims to analyze the principal's leadership management in addressing teacher work-related stress at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong, focusing on the following questions: (a) what strategies are implemented by the principal, (b) what is the impact on the teachers, and (c) what challenges are encountered and how does the

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Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam 8, no. 4 (2024): 1330–1344, https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v8i4.9640.

[12] Silalahi dan Marpaung, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah."

[13] Nofitasari dkk., "Kesehatan Mental Guru."

[14] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[15] Marwani, Megayanti, dan Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience."

[16] M. R. Saputra, E. Kuntarto, dan M. Sholeh, "Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru di Sekolah Dasar," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 2 (2025): 185–200.

[17] D. P. Pratiwi, "Principal Management in Improving the Professionalism of Teachers in MA Muhammadiyah Rejang Lebong," *Journal of Quality Assurance in Islamic Education (JQAIE)* 2, no. 2 (2022): 87–98, https://doi.org/10.47945/jqaie.v2i2.703.

principal address them? The results are expected to contribute to the development of the field of Islamic educational management in Indonesia.

Work-related stress is understood as the tension that arises when job demands exceed an individual's available resources. This perspective aligns with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which posits that psychological stress occurs when resources valued by an individual are threatened or lost. In a school context, leadership can serve as a contextual resource that buffers teachers against job demands.[18] A related framework identifies job demands and resources as key determinants of teachers' well-being and their intentions to leave their positions.[19] Within the educational sphere, teacher stress can be defined as a state of emotional and physical tension resulting from an imbalance between job demands and the capabilities or support available.[20]

In this study, the leadership and management practices of a school principal are understood as a systematic process—encompassing planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising programs and policies—aimed at fostering an optimal work environment for the school community, particularly for teachers. This view is consistent with research on principal management in *madrasah* (Islamic schools) in Rejang Lebong, which frames the principal's managerial functions as a catalyst for teacher professionalism.[21] Effective leadership in managing work-related stress requires sensitivity, empathy, and a strong commitment from the principal.[22]

The theological foundations of leadership in Islam are also relevant to the management of teacher stress. Allah the Almighty states in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 286:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

This means: "*Allah does not burden a soul beyond that which it can bear.*" (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 286)

This verse asserts that a leader must ensure the burdens placed upon their subordinates do not exceed their individual capacities; this principle serves as an ethical foundation for the fair and proportional distribution of tasks. The principles of gentleness and consultation in leadership are also emphasized in Quran, Ali 'Imran: 159, which notes that, by the grace of Allah, the Prophet was gentle toward his followers—further stating that a harsh or hard-hearted demeanor would only drive people away—and that he was therefore instructed to forgive them and engage in consultation with them.

[18] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[19] R. J. Collie, "Teacher Well-Being and Turnover Intentions: Investigating the Roles of Job Resources and Job Demands," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 93 (2023): 712–726, https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12587.

[20] Satria dan Fauzan, "Analisis Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Stres Kerja."

[21] Pratiwi, "Principal Management."

[22] Saputra, Kuntarto, dan Sholeh, "Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah."

Both of these values are utilized in this discussion to analyze the leadership practices observed in the field.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research method using a case study approach. The case study approach was selected because it enabled the researcher to explore a phenomenon in depth within a bounded system, utilizing various data collection techniques.[23] This approach align with the research focus: gaining an in-depth understanding of the principal's leadership management in addressing teacher work-related stress at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong within its natural context.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu Province, from February to May 2026. Primary data sources included the school principal, the vice-principal, and several teachers selected via purposive sampling based on three criteria: (1) having sufficient tenure to be familiar with the principal's leadership practices, (2) being directly involved in school programs and activities, and (3) consenting to serve as informants. There were 12 informants in total, consisting of one principal, one vice-principal, and ten teachers. For reporting purposes and to ensure confidentiality, the identities of the informants have been anonymized using the following codes: KS (principal), WK (vice-principal), and G1, G2, etc. (teachers). Secondary data were obtained from school documents, internal policies, teacher performance reports, and relevant literature.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. The researcher conducted semi-, in-depth interviews with the school principal, vice-principal, and selected teachers, using an interview guide that covered communication patterns, forms of emotional and professional support, task distribution, the work environment, welfare programs, perceived impacts, as well as challenges and the strategies used to address them. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, was recorded with the informant's consent, and was transcribed verbatim.

The type of observation employed was passive participatory observation, specifically focused observation: the researcher was present at the site and observed interactions without participating in the activities being observed. The observation focused on leadership dynamics and the interactions between the school principal and teachers during coordination meetings, informal gatherings in the teachers' lounge, and the implementation of teacher welfare initiatives, supported by observation sheets and field notes. A total of seven observation sessions were conducted throughout the research period.

[23] Muhammad Wahyu Ilhami dkk., "Penerapan Metode Studi Kasus dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 10, no. 9 (2024): 462–469, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11180129.

The documents collected included: (1) minutes and attendance lists from coordination meetings; (2) official decrees regarding the assignment of teaching duties and additional responsibilities for teachers; (3) the school's work program and detailed records on the use of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds for teacher development and welfare; (4) teacher attendance records and data on staff turnover or transfers; (5) teacher performance reports; and (6) photographic documentation of training sessions and social activities involving the teachers.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which has also been applied in qualitative case studies on school leadership, such as the one by Marwani et al. [24] The process consists of three cyclical stages. Data reduction: interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were read repeatedly, subjected to open coding, grouped into categories, and subsequently synthesized into themes—specifically, five leadership management strategies, their impacts, and the challenges and adaptive strategies involved. Data display: the coded results were organized into a thematic matrix and a descriptive narrative, supplemented by excerpts from interviews. Conclusion drawing and verification: preliminary conclusions were continuously tested by comparing statements across informants and cross-referencing them with observations and documents; these were then linked to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, Islamic values, and findings from previous research.

Data validity was ensured through four methods. First, source triangulation, which involved comparing accounts from the school principal, vice-principal, and teachers regarding the same issue. Second, method triangulation, which entails cross-referencing interview data with observations and documentation. Third, member checking, which consists of confirming summaries of findings with key informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations align with the informants' intended meanings. Fourth, the preservation of recordings, transcripts, and field notes to serve as an audit trail. In cases where data from different sources are inconsistent, follow-up actions—such as conducting additional interviews or examining further documentation—are taken.

Result and Discussion

Based on the research conducted at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong, five leadership management strategies employed by the school principal were identified as playing a significant role in addressing teachers' work-related stress. These strategies, along with their concrete applications and theoretical underpinnings, are summarized in Table 1 and elaborated upon in the following subsections; each is supported by interview excerpts and linked to relevant theories and findings from previous research.

[24] Marwani, Megayanti, dan Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience."

Strategy	Form of practice in SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong	Theoretical Foundation & Result
Open and Supportive Communication	Regular coordination meetings; individual consultation forums	COR (informational and emotional resources); Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 159; Cece et.al.; Silalahi dan Marpaungeiu
Emotional and Professional Support	Individual counseling, motivation, pedagogical guidance, facilitation of competency development	COR (personal resources); Yong dan Zhang; Zhan et.al.; Marwani et.al.
proportional delegation of tasks	Distribution of tasks based on teachers' competencies and capacities	job resources demand; Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 286; Creagh et.al.; Satria dan
conducive work	Adequate staff room, comprehensive facilities, supportive organizational culture	COR (condition resourcesn); Nofitasari et.al.; Marwani et.al.; Dreer
Sustainable welfare program	Relaxation and recreation, stress management training, appreciation, fitness	COR (sustainability of resources); Marwani et.al.; Nofitasari et.al.; Dreer

Table 1. A summary of the principal's leadership management strategies for addressing teacher work stress

Open Communication and Supportive

The implementation of leadership management at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong is manifested through an open and supportive communication pattern between the principal and the teachers. Regular coordination meetings and individual consultation forums are held periodically, providing a space for teachers to express concerns, challenges, and work-related needs. According to the informants, this communication pattern fosters a sense of security and ensures that they feel heard, which in turn reduces tension among the teachers. This is reflected in the following statement from an informant.

> "Sometimes the workload is heavy, which can make us feel pressured. We usually discuss this in meetings, allowing us to bring up the challenges we are facing." (KS, February 12, 2026)
> "If an issue cannot be raised during a meeting, I typically consult privately so that a solution can be found." (G3, February 15, 2026)

These findings are consistent with the results of other studies. Cece et al. demonstrated that the support from a school principal—as perceived by teachers—predicts their motivation and well-being;[25] thus, communication forums can be understood as channels through which such support is

[25] Cece dkk., "The Predictive Role of Perceived Support from Principals."

conveyed. Silalahi and Marpaung also found that open communication with teachers is an integral part of a principal's role in managing work-related stress,[26] while Marwani et al. reported that open dialogue—which provides space for teachers to express their aspirations and challenges—strengthens a supportive leadership relationship.[27] Within the framework of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, open communication serves as a source of both informational and emotional resources: teachers gain clarity regarding work expectations while simultaneously receiving acknowledgment for the difficulties they face, thereby reducing the perceived threat of resource loss.[28] In terms of values, this practice reflects the principles of gentleness and consultation (musyawarah) as outlined in Surah Ali 'Imran: 159.

Emotional dan Professional Support

The school principal actively provides emotional support to teachers who show signs of work-related stress. This support is offered through individual counseling, motivational encouragement, and the cultivation of a school atmosphere characterized by empathy and mutual care. In addition to emotional support, the principal provides professional support in the form of pedagogical guidance, access to learning resources, and the facilitation of professional development.

The need for such support stems from the reality that work-related stress among teachers arises as a response to various professional demands that must be met simultaneously. Teaching loads, administrative tasks, requirements for achieving learning outcomes, student management, and additional responsibilities beyond core duties can all serve as sources of professional pressure.

This pressure stems not only from a heavy workload but also from the demands to maintain the quality of instruction and meet students' needs amidst shifting policies and evolving school requirements. The accumulation of these demands can lead to feelings of exhaustion and stress, as well as difficulties in managing one's workload—situations in which teachers require support from school leadership.

One form of such support is the regular coordination meeting. These meetings provide a space for teachers to voice challenges encountered in their duties, discuss issues collectively, and receive guidance from the school. Consequently, coordination meetings serve as a mechanism for the school principal to identify work-related problems that could potentially cause stress for teachers, allowing for the timely provision of emotional and professional support. This is illustrated in the following statement from an informant.

[26] Silalahi dan Marpaung, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah."

[27] Marwani, Megayanti, dan Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience."

[28] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

> "Usually, it's noticeable through changes in behavior—for instance, someone might become quieter or frequently arrive late. When that happens, I call them over for a casual chat and ask what's weighing on them." (KS, February 15, 2026) "When I felt overwhelmed by administrative tasks, the principal checked in on how I was doing and helped guide me on how to get things finished. It was such a relief." (G5, February 15, 2026)

These findings align with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which posits that stress arises when an individual's resources are threatened or lost; consequently, the provision of emotional resources (such as empathy and care) and professional resources (such as guidance and training) by leaders serves as a buffering intervention.[29] Yong and Zhang demonstrated that affective commitment and job satisfaction act as mediators between leadership and reduced role stress, while Zhan et al. confirmed the role of affective commitment within the relationship between school leadership and teachers' role stress.[30] Similar practices were reported by Marwani et al. in an integrated Islamic school, where principals provided support to teachers experiencing stress, directed them toward training, and encouraged them to seek psychological assistance when necessary.[31] An important caveat to this comparison is that school principals are not professional counselors; therefore, the individual counseling provided at SMP Negeri 02 should be understood as an initial form of support, which ideally ought to be complemented by a referral mechanism to professional practitioners.

Proportional Delegation of Task

The school principal implements a structured and proportional system for delegating tasks, based on the individual competencies and capacities of each teacher, while also taking into account their personal and professional circumstances. According to the informants, this system prevents excessive workloads—a primary source of stress.

A systematic synthesis by Creagh et al. indicates that workload and the intensification of work are commonly linked to stress, burnout, and teacher attrition,[32] while a study by Satria and Fauzan identifies administrative demands as a major extrinsic factor contributing to teacher stress.[33] From a values-based perspective, this practice serves as a concrete application of the principle found in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:286)—that no burden should exceed an individual's capacity. Cross-referencing this with official task-allocation

[29] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[30] Zhan, Wang, dan Song, "The Relationship between Principals' Instructional Leadership and Teacher Retention."

[31] Marwani, Megayanti, dan Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience."

[32] Creagh dkk., "Workload, Work Intensification and Time Poverty."

[33] Collie, "Teacher Well-Being and Turnover Intentions."

documentation is necessary to ensure that the claim of the distribution being "equitable and fair" is not based solely on the informants' perceptions.

Creating a Conducive Work Environment

The school principal strives to create a work environment that is both physically and psychologically comfortable. Prioritizing the provision of adequate staff room facilities, comprehensive learning infrastructure, and a positive, supportive organizational culture is central to school management. According to informants, this conducive environment is closely linked to a reduction in work-related tension among teachers.

Nofitasari et al. examine the work environment, stress management, and the mental health of teachers as an interconnected continuum, suggesting that the quality of the work environment is inseparable from teachers' psychological well-being.[34] Marwani et al. also note that providing proper rest areas and balancing workloads are part of the principal's efforts to foster an environment that supports teachers.[35] Dreer's review of teacher well-being outcomes further reinforces why the quality of the work environment should be a priority for school management.[36] Within the framework of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, a high-quality physical environment and a positive psychological climate serve as "condition resources"—resources available to teachers without the need for them to be acquired through individual effort.[37]

Facilitation of Sustainable Teacher Welfare Programs

The school principal facilitates a teacher well-being program designed in a systematic and sustainable manner. This program includes joint relaxation and recreational activities, stress management training, recognition and appreciation for high-performing teachers, as well as health and fitness initiatives. According to informants, the consistent implementation of the program contributes to reduced stress and improved psychological well-being among teachers.

> "We organize activities to foster togetherness among teachers, as well as training sessions and recognition for high-achieving teachers. These activities are scheduled periodically so that teachers have space to refresh themselves." (WK, [March 20, 2026])

This information is corroborated by school work program documents and records of teacher activities.

[34] Nofitasari dkk., "Kesehatan Mental Guru."

[35] Marwani, Megayanti, dan Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience."

[36] Dreer, "On the Outcomes of Teacher Wellbeing."

[37] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

Marwani et al. report a similar practice—a monthly recognition program for high-achieving teachers, alongside seminars on mental health and stress—which they found to enhance intrinsic motivation and reduce feelings of overwhelm among teachers.[38] These findings align with the focus of Nofitasari et al. on stress management as a component of teacher mental health,[39] as well as with Dreer's review, which identifies teacher well-being as a critical outcome that requires active management.[40] Given that stress is cumulative, the "ongoing" nature of such programs is key; one-off or incidental activities are unlikely to build lasting resource reserves, a point underscored by the logic of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory.[41]

The Impact of Leadership Management on Teachers' Work-Related Stress

According to the informants, the consistent implementation of leadership management by the school principal has yielded four impacts. It should be noted that these impacts are assessed based on informant perceptions, behavioral observations, and documentary data; this study does not measure stress levels using psychometric instruments.

The first impact is a reduction in teachers' work-related stress. Teachers who previously exhibited symptoms such as irritability, diminished concentration, and high absenteeism now demonstrate more positive behavioral changes. One teacher remarked, "I used to get easily agitated when tasks piled up; now, I feel calmer because the workload is distributed, and I can talk to the principal about it." (G2, March 20, 2026)

This shift is also reflected in the teacher attendance records found in school documents. These findings align with quantitative evidence suggesting that transformational leadership reduces role-related stress[42] dan and burnout among teachers through psychological empowerment.[43]

The second impact is an increase in work motivation and productivity. Teachers now show greater enthusiasm in preparing for lessons, demonstrate more creativity in developing teaching methods and materials, and are more proactive in pursuing professional development. This pattern is consistent with findings by Cece et al., which indicate that support from a school principal is linked to teacher motivation and well-being.[44]

The third impact is the creation of a harmonious and conducive work climate. Relationships between the school principal and teachers, as well as

[38] Marwani, Megayanti, dan Ilias, "Nurturing Teacher Resilience."

[39] Nofitasari dkk., "Kesehatan Mental Guru."

[40] Dreer, "On the Outcomes of Teacher Wellbeing."

[41] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[42] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[43] Tsang, Du, dan Teng, "Transformational Leadership, Teacher Burnout, and Psychological Empowerment."

[44] Cece dkk., "The Predictive Role of Perceived Support from Principals."

among the teachers themselves, become more collaborative; teachers feel more comfortable expressing their opinions and seeking assistance. This harmonious climate serves indirectly as a buffer against the stress that may arise from daily job demands—a factor interpreted within the Conservation of Resources (COR) framework as a social resource.[45]

The fourth impact is an increase in teachers' commitment and loyalty to the institution. Teachers demonstrate a stronger commitment to the school's vision and mission and show a greater willingness to contribute to school development programs; according to informants, this is reflected in lower rates of teacher absenteeism and turnover. These findings align with evidence suggesting that teachers' trust in the school principal strengthens their work commitment,[46] [47] and that affective commitment acts as a connecting mechanism between leadership and reduced role stress.[48]

Challenges in Implementation and Strategies to Overcome Them

Although the implementation of leadership management to address work-related stress among teachers at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong has had a positive impact, it faces three challenges. First, stress levels vary among teachers, necessitating a personalized and differentiated approach; not all teachers respond to the same strategies in the same way. Second, the principal's time available for providing individual attention is limited by administrative responsibilities and official meetings. Third, the budget for teacher well-being programs is limited.

The challenge was described by the informant as follows.

> "The challenge lies in time. In addition to working with teachers, I also have numerous administrative tasks and official meetings to attend to, which makes it impossible for me to provide individual guidance to every teacher. Consequently, I delegate some of the mentoring responsibilities to the vice principals and coordinators." (Principal, March 20, 2026)

> "The budget for teacher-related activities is limited, so we make the most of the School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds and

[45] Yong dan Zhang, "How Transformational Leadership Reduces Teachers' Role Stress."

[46] A. N. Mansor, R. Abdullah, dan K. A. Jamaludin, "The Influence of Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Trust in Principals on Teachers' Working Commitment," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00985-6.

[47] A. Ç. Kılınç dkk., "How Transformational Leadership Influences Teachers' Commitment and Innovative Practices: Understanding the Moderating Role of Trust in Principal," *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 52, no. 2 (2024): 455–474, https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432221082803.

[48] Zhan, Wang, dan Song, "The Relationship between Principals' Instructional Leadership and Teacher Retention."

establish collaborations with other parties." (Vice Principal, March 20, 2026)

The challenge of time is consistent with the synthesis by Creagh et al., which indicates that work intensification and "time poverty" are experienced not only by teachers but also by school leaders;[49] Horwood et al. further suggest that school principals themselves are susceptible to burnout.[50] Consequently, the time constraints faced by principals are not merely technical hurdles but factors that necessitate a division of roles. To address this, principals have developed adaptive strategies: (1) establishing a peer-counseling team that engages senior teachers to serve as peer counselors, thereby catering to diverse individual needs; (2) delegating certain supervisory or developmental functions to vice-principals and subject-area coordinators to mitigate time constraints; and (3) optimizing the use of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds while forging partnerships with relevant stakeholders to overcome budgetary limitations. These strategies demonstrate that leadership is exercised in a distributed manner, while simultaneously expanding the range of social resources available to teachers within the framework of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory.

Synthesis, Implications, and Limitations

Overall, these five strategies can be interpreted as the principal's efforts to augment and safeguard teachers' resources while simultaneously mitigating work demands: open communication provides informational resources; emotional and professional support offers personal resources; proportional delegation reduces work demands; a conducive environment supplies situational resources; and well-being programs ensure the sustainability of these resources. This success is rooted in the principal's commitment to internalizing values of fairness, gentleness, and leadership responsibility, all derived from Islamic teachings.

In practical terms, these findings suggest that principals should (1) schedule regular communication forums, (2) establish a documented, capacity-based distribution of tasks, (3) provide referral mechanisms for teachers in need of professional assistance, and (4) allocate a portion of the School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds toward sustainable well-being programs. The limitations of this study include its single-case study design—meaning the findings are not intended for generalization—a reliance primarily on the perceptions of informants, and the absence of standardized stress-level measurements. Future research could quantitatively examine the

[49] Creagh dkk., "Workload, Work Intensification and Time Poverty."

[50] M. Horwood dkk., "Burning Passion, Burning Out: The Passionate School Principal, Burnout, Job Satisfaction, and Extending the Dualistic Model of Passion," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 113, no. 8 (2021): 1668, https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000664.

relationship between these strategies and teacher stress—or employ a mixed-methods design—while also conducting cross-school comparisons.

Conclusion

This study shows that the principal's leadership and management play a crucial role in addressing teacher work-related stress at SMP Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong. The conclusions are organized according to three research questions. First, regarding the strategies implemented by the principal, five approaches were identified: fostering open and supportive communication, providing emotional and professional support, delegating tasks proportionally, creating a conducive work environment, and facilitating ongoing teacher well-being programs. These strategies are rooted in the Islamic values of justice and compassion and can be explained through the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as efforts to augment and protect teachers' resources.

Second, concerning the impact on teachers, the informants perceived that these strategies led to reduced work-related stress, increased motivation and productivity, a more harmonious school climate, and heightened teacher commitment. These impacts were assessed through interviews, observations, and documentation, rather than through psychometric stress measurements. Third, regarding challenges and how they are addressed, the implementation faced obstacles such as the diverse needs of teachers, the principal's limited time, and budgetary constraints. These were managed through peer counseling, delegating supervisory responsibilities to vice principals and subject-area coordinators, and utilizing the School Operational Assistance (BOS) fund alongside external partnerships.

This study recommends that principals adopt humanistic and supportive leadership and management principles to address teacher work-related stress, supplemented by referral mechanisms to professional specialists. As this is a single-case study, any generalizations should be made with caution. Future research could expand upon this work by employing quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to measure the influence of a principal's leadership and management on teacher work-related stress in a more quantifiable and representative manner.

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