

Leadership and Work Discipline in Foreign Language Teaching: Explaining German Language Teacher Performance in Indonesian Island Schools

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Abstract

Teacher performance is a critical factor in the effectiveness of foreign language teaching, particularly in geographically isolated school contexts where professional support and instructional resources are limited. However, empirical evidence remains scarce regarding how school leadership and teacher work discipline jointly influence foreign language teacher performance in such settings. This study aims to examine the individual and combined effects of principal leadership and work discipline on the performance of German language teachers in Indonesian island schools. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 44 German language teachers from six senior high schools in the Ambon and Lease Islands. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between leadership, work discipline, and teacher performance ($R = 0.789$, $p < 0.001$), with work discipline emerging as the strongest predictor. Together, the variables explained 62.3% of the variance in teacher performance. These findings demonstrate that consistent professional behavior and supportive leadership structures are key drivers of effective foreign language teaching in remote contexts. The study contributes empirical evidence from an under-researched educational setting and highlights the need for integrated strategies that strengthen both leadership practices and teacher discipline to improve instructional quality.

Keywords: Language Teaching; German Language Teachers; Teacher Performance; Principal Leadership; Work Discipline; Island Schools

1. Introduction

Teacher performance is a central determinant of effectiveness in foreign language teaching, as it directly influences instructional quality, learner engagement, and the development of communicative competence. In second and foreign language contexts, teachers are expected not only to deliver content but also to facilitate interaction, promote meaningful language use, and create environments that support sustained practice (Ly, 2024). These responsibilities require consistent lesson preparation, effective classroom management, and the ability to adapt teaching strategies to diverse learner needs. Consequently, variations in teacher performance can lead to significant differences in student outcomes,

particularly in foreign language learning, where progress depends heavily on continuity, exposure, and active participation (Huang et al., 2024). Despite ongoing efforts to improve language education, disparities in teacher performance remain a persistent issue across educational contexts.

These disparities become more pronounced in geographically isolated and island-based school environments, where structural and professional constraints can limit teaching effectiveness. Schools in remote areas often face restricted access to instructional resources, limited opportunities for professional development, and reduced collaboration among teachers (Mustapha & Boudjemaa, 2025). In foreign language teaching, these challenges are especially critical because teachers depend on access to authentic materials, updated pedagogical practices, and professional networks to sustain instructional quality. In Indonesian island regions such as the Ambon and Lease Islands, these constraints create conditions in which teachers must operate with minimal institutional and professional support (Liu et al., 2024). As a result, maintaining effective foreign language teaching in these contexts requires a deeper understanding of the internal factors that influence teacher performance.

Within such constrained environments, school leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the conditions under which foreign language teaching occurs. Principals are responsible for organizing instructional processes, supporting teacher development, and ensuring that teaching activities align with educational goals (Ralebese et al., 2025). Effective leadership can provide direction, supervision, and motivation, thereby fostering a structured and supportive teaching environment. In foreign language education, this support is particularly important because teachers often need guidance in accessing teaching materials, implementing communicative approaches, and adapting instruction to local learning conditions (He et al., 2024). However, the influence of leadership is typically indirect, operating through the organizational environment and the extent to which teachers are able to translate institutional support into classroom practice.

In addition to leadership, teacher work discipline represents a critical factor that directly affects instructional effectiveness. Work discipline in teaching is reflected in consistent professional behaviors, including punctuality, thorough lesson preparation, adherence to instructional schedules, and responsibility toward teaching tasks. In foreign language classrooms, where learning depends on regular exposure and structured interaction, such consistency is essential (Zhang, 2024). Teachers who demonstrate strong discipline are more likely to deliver well-prepared lessons, maintain continuity in instruction, and create stable learning environments that support language acquisition. Unlike leadership, which shapes the broader institutional context, work discipline operates at the behavioral level, exerting a more immediate and observable influence on teaching performance.

Although leadership and work discipline have been widely examined in educational research, existing studies have largely treated these factors separately and within general education settings rather than within foreign language teaching contexts. Moreover, most empirical evidence has been generated from urban or well-resourced school environments, where institutional support systems are relatively stable (Wulandari et al., 2021). As a result, there is limited understanding of how leadership and work discipline jointly influence teacher performance in remote and resource-constrained settings. This gap is particularly significant in foreign language education, where effective teaching requires both organizational support and consistent instructional behavior. The absence of integrated evidence from

island school contexts limits the ability to design contextually appropriate strategies for improving teaching performance.

Addressing this gap is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, examining leadership and work discipline as combined predictors of teacher performance provides a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational and behavioral factors interact in shaping instructional outcomes (Achi et al., 2025). From a practical perspective, identifying the relative and joint contributions of these factors can inform targeted interventions aimed at improving foreign language teaching in under-resourced contexts. In island schools, where external support is limited, strengthening internal factors such as leadership practices and teacher discipline becomes essential for sustaining instructional quality.

In response to this need, the present study aims to examine the individual and combined effects of principal leadership and work discipline on the performance of German language teachers in Indonesian island schools. Using a quantitative correlational design, the study investigates how these variables contribute to variations in teacher performance within the specific context of foreign language teaching. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1) To what extent does principal leadership influence German language teacher performance? (2) To what extent does teacher work discipline influence teacher performance? and (3) To what extent do principal leadership and work discipline jointly explain variations in teacher performance?

This study contributes to the field of foreign language education by providing empirical evidence on the combined effects of leadership and work discipline within an under-researched island context. It extends existing research by integrating organizational and behavioral perspectives on teacher performance specifically within foreign language teaching, rather than treating these factors in isolation. In addition, the findings offer practical insights for improving instructional quality by highlighting the importance of both supportive leadership and consistent professional behavior in sustaining effective foreign language teaching in geographically constrained educational environments.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foreign Language Teacher Performance

Teacher performance in foreign language education is a complex construct that extends beyond the completion of instructional tasks to encompass the quality of pedagogical practices, classroom interaction, and learner engagement. In second and foreign language contexts, effective teaching requires not only subject knowledge but also the ability to create communicative environments that promote active language use. This includes structured lesson planning, integration of language skills, and the facilitation of meaningful interaction that supports language acquisition (Lakew et al., 2025). As a result, teacher performance is directly linked to the effectiveness of instructional delivery and the development of learners' communicative competence.

Existing research consistently indicates that high-performing foreign language teachers demonstrate strong pedagogical organization, consistent instructional delivery, and the use of learner-centered approaches. These practices are associated with improved student participation and better learning outcomes, particularly in environments where exposure to the target language is limited (Zhou et al., 2025). A dominant pattern in the literature suggests that teacher performance functions as a key

mediator between curriculum design and actual learning outcomes, emphasizing the importance of consistent and effective instructional practices.

However, the literature also reveals a critical limitation. Much of the existing research on teacher performance has been conducted in well-resourced educational settings, where teachers benefit from access to instructional materials, professional development, and collaborative networks. Consequently, the understanding of teacher performance remains largely context-neutral and does not adequately account for variations in teaching conditions (Lena & Nikolov, 2025). In remote or resource-constrained environments, such as island schools, these assumptions may not hold, as teachers often operate with limited support. This limitation highlights the need to examine teacher performance within specific contextual conditions, particularly in foreign language teaching where instructional effectiveness is highly sensitive to environmental constraints. This contextual dependence leads to the need to consider external and internal factors that shape teaching performance.

2.2 Leadership in Foreign Language Teaching

Educational leadership has been widely recognized as a key factor influencing teaching quality and school effectiveness. Within foreign language education, leadership plays a critical role in shaping instructional conditions by providing direction, facilitating access to resources, and supporting teacher development (Li et al., 2023). Instructional leadership, in particular, emphasizes the principal's role in supervising teaching practices, promoting pedagogical improvement, and ensuring alignment between instructional activities and educational objectives.

Research shows that effective leadership contributes to improved teacher performance by establishing clear expectations, encouraging professional collaboration, and providing continuous feedback. In foreign language teaching, this support is especially important because teachers often require guidance in implementing communicative approaches, adapting instructional strategies, and integrating language skills effectively (Sari et al., 2025). Leadership can also enhance teaching quality by creating a supportive environment that encourages innovation and professional growth. The dominant pattern in the literature suggests that leadership improves teacher performance indirectly by shaping the organizational climate and influencing teacher motivation and engagement.

Despite these established findings, several limitations remain. First, the majority of studies have focused on general education settings rather than on foreign language teaching specifically, where instructional demands differ significantly. Second, existing research often assumes stable institutional conditions, overlooking the challenges faced in remote or geographically isolated schools (Mazandarani, 2020). In island contexts, leadership practices may be constrained by limited resources, administrative burdens, and reduced access to professional support systems. As a result, the effectiveness of leadership in such environments remains insufficiently understood.

Furthermore, leadership has frequently been examined as an isolated variable, without considering its interaction with teacher-level factors. This creates an incomplete understanding of how leadership translates into improved teaching performance, particularly in contexts where individual teacher behavior plays a critical role (Malmström & Öqvist, 2025). These limitations indicate the need for a more integrated approach that examines leadership alongside other determinants of teacher performance, particularly in foreign language teaching contexts where both organizational support and individual practices are essential.

2.3 Work Discipline and Teaching Effectiveness

Work discipline refers to the consistency with which individuals adhere to professional standards, organizational expectations, and responsibilities associated with their roles. In teaching, discipline is reflected in behaviors such as punctuality, thorough lesson preparation, adherence to instructional schedules, and commitment to delivering instructional content effectively (Qasserras, 2025). In foreign language classrooms, these behaviors are particularly important because language learning requires regular exposure, structured practice, and continuity in instruction.

Empirical studies indicate that teachers with strong work discipline are more likely to maintain organized classroom environments, deliver consistent instruction, and ensure that learning activities are implemented as planned. This consistency contributes directly to improved teaching effectiveness, as it supports the gradual development of language skills through sustained practice (Osias & Ladica, 2024). A clear pattern in the literature shows that work discipline functions as a direct determinant of teaching performance, influencing the quality and stability of classroom practices.

However, despite its importance, work discipline has received relatively limited attention in foreign language education research. Most studies have focused on broader constructs such as teacher motivation, competence, or professional development, with discipline often treated as a secondary factor (Impuesto, 2024). Additionally, existing research has rarely explored the role of discipline within specific instructional contexts, such as foreign language teaching, where its impact may be more pronounced due to the structured nature of language learning.

Another key limitation is the lack of integration between discipline and organizational factors such as leadership. While discipline is recognized as an individual-level determinant of performance, its interaction with institutional support structures remains underexplored (Soegiarto et al., 2024). This creates a gap in understanding how behavioral consistency and organizational conditions jointly influence teaching effectiveness. Addressing this gap requires a framework that considers both individual and institutional dimensions of teacher performance.

2.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The preceding review demonstrates that teacher performance in foreign language education is influenced by both organizational and individual factors. Leadership operates at the organizational level by shaping the conditions under which teaching occurs, while work discipline operates at the individual level by influencing the consistency and quality of instructional practices. These two factors represent complementary dimensions of teacher performance, suggesting that their combined effect may provide a more comprehensive explanation of teaching effectiveness.

In this study, principal leadership is conceptualized as a factor that provides direction, supervision, and support, thereby facilitating effective teaching practices. Work discipline is conceptualized as a behavioral factor that ensures consistency in instructional delivery and adherence to professional standards. Teacher performance, in turn, is viewed as the outcome of these interacting influences, reflected in the quality of teaching practices and instructional effectiveness in foreign language classrooms.

The integration of these variables is particularly relevant in remote and resource-constrained contexts, where both institutional support and individual commitment are critical for maintaining teaching quality. In such environments, leadership may enhance the effectiveness of discipline by reinforcing expectations and providing necessary support, while strong discipline may enable teachers to utilize

available resources more effectively. This complementary relationship forms the basis of the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationships between principal leadership, work discipline, and teacher performance.

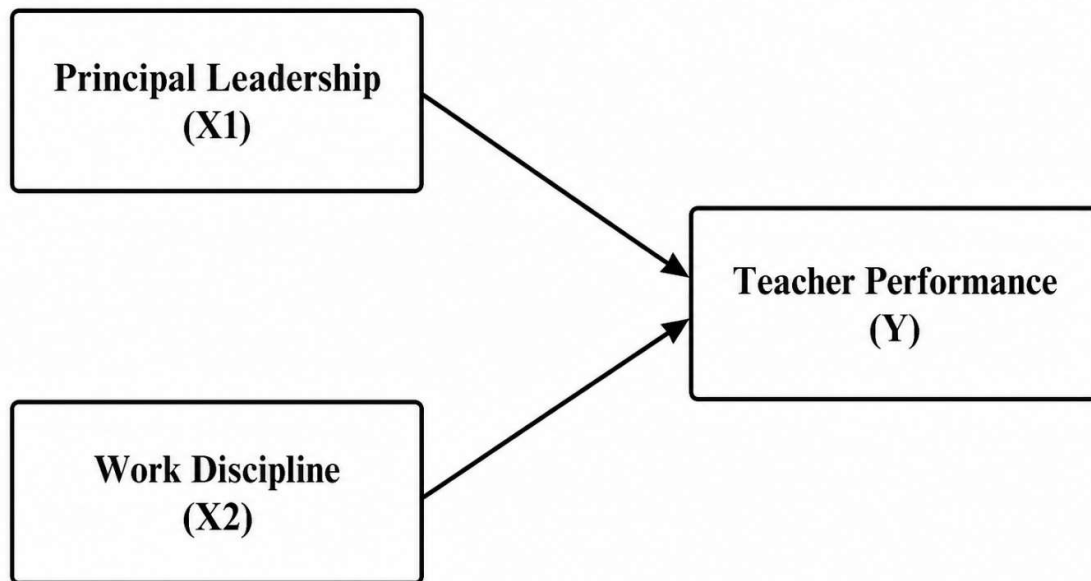


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on German language teacher performance.
- **H2:** Work discipline has a positive and significant effect on German language teacher performance.
- **H3:** Principal leadership and work discipline jointly have a significant effect on German language teacher performance.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between principal leadership, teacher work discipline, and German language teacher performance. The design was selected because the study aims to identify both the individual and combined effects of leadership and discipline on teacher performance without manipulating the research environment. A correlational approach is appropriate for analyzing naturally occurring relationships among variables and for estimating their predictive strength within real educational contexts. Given the study's objective to explain variance in teacher performance, multiple linear regression was used as the primary analytical technique, allowing for the simultaneous examination of the contribution of each independent variable.

3.2 Context and Participants

The study was conducted in six senior high schools located in Ambon City and the surrounding Lease Islands in Indonesia. These schools represent geographically dispersed and resource-constrained educational environments where access to professional development opportunities, instructional materials, and institutional support is limited. Such conditions make this context particularly relevant for examining factors that influence foreign language teaching performance.

The participants consisted of 44 German language teachers who met the inclusion criterion of having at least three years of teaching experience. This criterion ensured that respondents had sufficient familiarity with classroom practices, institutional expectations, and instructional responsibilities. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who were actively engaged in foreign language teaching within the targeted schools. Although the sample size is relatively small, it reflects the limited population of German language teachers in the region and remains appropriate for regression analysis involving two predictor variables.

3.3 Instruments and Variable Operationalization

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the three core constructs of the study: principal leadership (X_1), teacher work discipline (X_2), and teacher performance (Y). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), enabling the quantification of participants' perceptions and experiences.

Principal leadership was operationalized through indicators reflecting managerial and instructional practices, including planning, supervision, communication, and support for teaching activities. Teacher work discipline was measured through behavioral indicators such as punctuality, adherence to teaching schedules, lesson preparation, and responsibility in carrying out instructional duties. Teacher performance was operationalized as the effectiveness of teaching practices, including lesson organization, classroom management, and the implementation of foreign language instruction aligned with communicative teaching principles.

To ensure validity, the instrument items were developed based on established theoretical constructs and tested using item-total correlation analysis. All items exceeded the acceptable correlation threshold ($r > 0.30$), indicating adequate construct validity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with all variables achieving coefficients above 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency. These procedures ensured that the instruments consistently and accurately measured the constructs defined in the conceptual framework.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. Formal permission was obtained from the participating schools prior to the administration of the questionnaire. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection.

The questionnaires were distributed directly to the participants and collected upon completion to ensure a high response rate and minimize missing data. The data collection process was conducted within a defined time frame to maintain consistency and reduce the influence of external variables. All responses were reviewed for completeness before being entered into the statistical analysis software.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 22. The analytical process consisted of preliminary assumption testing followed by inferential statistical analysis. Before conducting regression analysis, several classical assumptions were examined to ensure the appropriateness of the model.

Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, with significance values greater than 0.05 indicating that the data were normally distributed. Multicollinearity among the independent variables was evaluated using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, with Tolerance values exceeding 0.10 and VIF values below 10 confirming the absence of multicollinearity. Heteroscedasticity was examined using the Glejser test, with significance values above 0.05 indicating that the variance of residuals was constant.

Following the confirmation of these assumptions, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the effects of principal leadership and work discipline on teacher performance. The strength of the relationship between variables was assessed using the multiple correlation coefficient (R), while the explanatory power of the model was determined through the coefficient of determination (R^2). Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level. The analysis treated each teacher as an independent unit of observation, ensuring the independence of data and preventing duplication. Given the sample size and the number of predictors, the model was considered appropriate for detecting moderate to strong relationships.

3.6 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

This study adhered to ethical research principles by ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, and the confidentiality of all respondents. No personal identifiers were collected, and all data were used exclusively for research purposes.

Despite these safeguards, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The use of self-reported data may introduce response bias, as participants may overestimate or underestimate their behaviors and performance. Additionally, the relatively small sample size and the focus on a specific geographic region limit the generalizability of the findings. However, the study provides valuable context-specific insights into foreign language teaching in island school settings, which remain underrepresented in the existing literature.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the distribution of the study variables. Principal leadership (X_1) yielded a mean score of 145.43 ($SD = 13.74$), while teacher work discipline (X_2) showed a mean of 145.41 ($SD = 11.37$). Teacher performance (Y) recorded a mean of 133.18 ($SD = 11.10$). The standard deviations indicate moderate variability across respondents for all variables.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 44)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principal Leadership (X_1)	145.43	13.74
Teacher Work Discipline (X_2)	145.41	11.37
Teacher Performance (Y)	133.18	11.10

4.2 Assumption Testing

Prior to inferential analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to verify the suitability of the dataset for regression analysis.

The normality of the data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. All variables produced significance values greater than 0.05, indicating that the assumption of normality was satisfied.

Multicollinearity was examined using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistics. Both independent variables showed Tolerance values of 0.611 and VIF values of 1.636, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity was evaluated using the Glejser test. The significance values for principal leadership ($p = 0.135$) and teacher work discipline ($p = 0.783$) exceeded 0.05, indicating homoscedastic residuals.

Table 2
Summary of Assumption Testing Results (N = 44)

Test	Indicator	Value	Decision
Normality	Kolmogorov–Smirnov Sig.	> 0.05 (all variables)	Normal distribution
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	0.611	Acceptable
	VIF	1.636	No multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Sig. (X_1)	0.135	Homoscedastic
	Glejser Sig. (X_2)	0.783	Homoscedastic

4.3 Correlation Analysis (RQ1 and RQ2)

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. Principal leadership (X_1) was positively correlated with teacher performance (Y) ($r = 0.546$, $p < 0.001$). Teacher work discipline (X_2) demonstrated a stronger positive correlation with teacher performance (Y) ($r = 0.786$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, **principal leadership** and teacher work discipline were positively correlated ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3
Correlation Matrix of Study Variables (N = 44)

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1 (Leadership)	1	0.623**	0.546**

X ₂ (Discipline)	0.623**	1	0.786**
Y (Performance)	0.546**	0.786**	1

Note: $p < 0.001$

4.4 Regression Analysis (RQ3)

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of principal leadership (X_1) and teacher work discipline (X_2) on teacher performance (Y).

The analysis produced a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = 0.789$. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.623, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.605. The standard error of the estimate was 6.979. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 41) = 33.864$, $p < 0.001$.

The standardized regression coefficients showed that teacher work discipline ($\beta = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$) had a larger coefficient compared to **principal leadership** ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.458$).

Table 4
Multiple Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance, N = 44)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	18.958	14.109	—	1.344	0.186
Leadership (X_1)	0.074	0.099	0.092	0.748	0.458
Discipline (X_2)	0.711	0.120	0.729	5.942	0.000

Table 5
Model Summary of Regression Analysis (N = 44)

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
0.789	0.623	0.605	6.979	33.864	< 0.001

5. Discussion

5.1 Leadership in Foreign Language Teaching

The findings indicate that principal leadership is positively associated with German language teacher performance, although its direct contribution is comparatively modest. This suggests that leadership operates primarily as a structural and enabling factor rather than a direct determinant of classroom-level performance (Joshi et al., 2024). In this study, leadership appears to support the organization of instructional processes, the coordination of teaching activities, and the provision of professional guidance that facilitates effective language teaching.

This interpretation aligns with instructional leadership theory, which conceptualizes school leaders as facilitators of teaching and learning rather than direct agents of instructional delivery. Previous studies have consistently shown that leadership contributes to teaching quality by strengthening lesson planning practices, supporting teacher development, and maintaining alignment between instructional goals and classroom implementation (Windasari et al., 2025). The present findings extend this perspective to foreign language teaching by demonstrating that leadership retains its relevance in

contexts where instructional effectiveness depends on structured support for communicative and skill-integrated teaching approaches.

At the same time, the relatively smaller effect of leadership suggests that its influence is mediated through organizational conditions rather than enacted directly in classroom behavior. Unlike variables that operate at the level of teaching practice, leadership shapes the broader environment within which teachers perform. This distinction helps explain why leadership contributes to performance but does not emerge as the strongest predictor (Saleem et al., 2021). The findings therefore reinforce the view that leadership is a necessary but not sufficient condition for improving teaching performance, particularly in contexts where day-to-day instructional consistency plays a central role.

5.2 Work Discipline as a Direct Driver of Performance

The findings indicate that teacher work discipline exerts the strongest influence on German language teacher performance. This finding indicates that performance in foreign language teaching is closely linked to consistent professional behavior, including punctuality, systematic lesson preparation, adherence to instructional schedules, and sustained responsibility in delivering teaching tasks (Febriani et al., 2023). These behaviors operate directly within the classroom and therefore translate immediately into observable teaching outcomes.

This pattern is consistent with research that identifies discipline as a key determinant of instructional effectiveness. In foreign language education, where learning depends on repeated exposure, structured interaction, and continuity of practice, disciplined teaching behavior ensures that instructional processes are implemented consistently (Bodur et al., 2023). Teachers who maintain regular teaching routines and adhere to planned instructional activities create stable learning conditions that support language acquisition.

The strength of this effect highlights the role of discipline as an operational mechanism through which teaching quality is realized. While leadership provides the structural framework for teaching, discipline governs the execution of instructional practices. This distinction clarifies why discipline emerges as the strongest predictor in the model: it directly regulates the behaviors that define effective teaching (Parveen et al., 2023). The findings therefore emphasize that improvements in teacher performance are closely tied to behavioral consistency at the classroom level rather than solely to organizational support.

5.3 Combined Effect in Island School Contexts

The combined effect of principal leadership and teacher work discipline indicates that teacher performance is shaped by the interaction of organizational and behavioral factors. The results show that a substantial proportion of performance variance is explained by these variables together, suggesting that neither factor operates independently in determining teaching outcomes (Simanjuntak et al., 2026).

In the context of island schools, this interaction becomes particularly significant. Geographic isolation, limited access to professional development, and resource constraints create conditions in which both leadership support and disciplined teaching practices are essential (Mincu, 2022). Leadership contributes by establishing structure, providing guidance, and coordinating available resources, while discipline ensures that instructional activities are implemented consistently despite environmental limitations.

This interdependence highlights a contextual dynamic that is less visible in more resource-rich settings. In remote environments, the absence of either strong leadership or disciplined teaching behavior can undermine instructional effectiveness. Leadership initiatives require consistent implementation to produce results, while disciplined teachers depend on organizational support to sustain their practices (Sasere & Matashu, 2025). The findings therefore suggest that the relationship between leadership and discipline is complementary, with each factor reinforcing the effectiveness of the other in shaping teacher performance.

This study contributes novel empirical evidence by demonstrating that, in foreign language teaching within geographically isolated contexts, behavioral discipline functions as a stronger determinant of teacher performance than organizational leadership (Maqbool et al., 2024). While prior research has emphasized the importance of leadership, the present findings clarify that consistent instructional behavior plays a more direct and dominant role in sustaining teaching effectiveness under constrained conditions.

5.4 Implications for Foreign Language Teaching

The findings of this study provide several implications for foreign language education, particularly in contexts characterized by limited resources and geographic constraints. First, teacher training programs in foreign language education should explicitly incorporate structured routines for lesson sequencing, time allocation for communicative interaction, and consistency in integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities, as these practices directly support sustained language exposure and classroom interaction. Beyond pedagogical knowledge, teachers require structured routines in lesson planning, time management, and classroom organization to ensure consistent implementation of language teaching activities.

Second, leadership development initiatives should strengthen principals' capacity to provide instructional supervision specific to foreign language teaching, including monitoring communicative teaching practices, facilitating access to authentic language materials, and supporting collaboration among language teachers to enhance instructional consistency. Leadership practices that emphasize clear expectations, ongoing feedback, and collaborative engagement can enhance the conditions under which teachers perform. This is particularly important in foreign language education, where effective teaching requires the integration of multiple language skills and sustained instructional coherence.

Third, discipline-based professional standards should be institutionalized within schools. Establishing clear expectations regarding attendance, lesson preparation, and instructional delivery can promote accountability and consistency in teaching practices. By embedding discipline within the professional culture of schools, institutions can ensure that teaching performance remains stable and aligned with educational objectives.

These implications are directly grounded in the study's findings, which demonstrate that while leadership provides structural support, disciplined teaching behavior is central to achieving effective performance. Together, these elements form a practical framework for strengthening foreign language teaching in both typical and resource-constrained contexts.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The use of self-reported questionnaire data introduces the possibility of response bias, as participants may present their behaviors in a more favorable manner. In addition, the relatively small sample size and the focus on a specific geographic region limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other educational contexts. The cross-sectional design also restricts the ability to examine changes in teacher performance over time.

Future research may address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, incorporating longitudinal designs, and integrating qualitative approaches to capture deeper insights into teaching practices and leadership dynamics. Further studies may also examine additional variables, such as teacher motivation, institutional support, or collaborative practices, to extend the explanatory model of foreign language teacher performance.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the extent to which principal leadership and teacher work discipline explain German language teacher performance in Indonesian island school contexts. The findings confirm that both variables significantly contribute to performance; however, work discipline emerges as the strongest predictor, indicating that consistent professional behavior plays a decisive role in shaping effective foreign language teaching.

The study contributes to foreign language education by clarifying the distinct roles of organizational and behavioral factors. Leadership supports instructional conditions, while discipline directly governs the execution of teaching practices. This distinction provides a clearer explanation of how teaching effectiveness is achieved in geographically isolated environments.

The practical implications are clear. Efforts to improve foreign language teaching should not rely solely on leadership enhancement but must also prioritize the development of discipline-based professional practices. Strengthening routines related to lesson planning, punctuality, and instructional consistency can produce immediate improvements in teaching quality, especially in contexts where external support is limited.

These conclusions should be interpreted in light of the study's limitations. The relatively small sample size, the focus on a specific regional context, and the use of self-reported data limit broader generalization. In addition, the cross-sectional design does not capture how leadership and discipline effects may evolve over time.

Future research should extend this work by employing larger and more diverse samples, incorporating longitudinal approaches, and examining additional variables such as motivation, school climate, and instructional support mechanisms. Such efforts would deepen understanding of how teacher performance develops across different foreign language teaching contexts.

In sum, effective foreign language teaching in island schools depends on the alignment between leadership support and disciplined professional practice, with behavioral consistency emerging as the key driver of sustained teacher performance.

7. Declarations

Ethics Approval

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for educational research. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional authority prior to data collection. All procedures involving human participants were reviewed to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and responsible data handling.

Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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