.

Principal Transformational Leadership Style
on Teacher Performance

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Improving the quality of education depends greatly on enhancing teacher performance, which remains a persistent challenge in many schools. Several studies indicate that low motivation, limited creativity in teaching, and minimal teacher participation in decision-making continue to hinder educational progress. This review examines how the transformational leadership style of principals influences teacher performance through motivation, commitment, discipline, and the development of a positive school culture. This study used a qualitative descriptive literature review to analyze eighteen peer-reviewed publications issued between 2018 and 2024. The review process included identifying, selecting, and synthesizing research related to principal leadership and teacher performance. The findings show that transformational leadership directly improves teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the profession. It also reveals that these effects are reinforced by mediating factors such as work discipline, intrinsic motivation, and teacher commitment. Furthermore, a supportive school culture strengthens the overall impact of leadership, creating an environment that encourages collaboration, trust, and shared goals. The results suggest that transformational leadership is a key factor in promoting teacher professionalism and the overall quality of education. Principals who act as visionary leaders, motivators, and mentors can build a culture of continuous improvement within their schools. The study recommends further empirical research using longitudinal and comparative approaches to validate these findings and explore how different leadership frameworks can be integrated to support sustainable educational excellence.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Education is essential for human progress, as it is responsible for producing citizens who can contribute to national development. Beyond supporting basic human survival, education also plays a pivotal role in developing future-ready individuals who are imaginative, resourceful, and full of great ideas (Aprima & Sari, 2022). Siswondo and Agustina (2021) emphasize that education is a continuous process and is very important for personal growth. Furthermore, education is fundamentally a social process: Rasyid et al. (2020) note that interactions in the home, the classroom, and the wider community are the driving force

behind the educational process. Through these interactions, education instills norms of behavior and equips students with the values and skills needed to take on their roles in society. The ultimate goal is to produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also virtuous, enabling them to excel in every aspect of life (Yunarti, 2014).

Central to achieving these educational outcomes is the performance of teachers. Improving teacher performance in schools is a critical strategy to raise the quality of education (Kanada et al., 2024). Sinaga et al. (2021) report that effective teachers have a significant impact on student learning and character development in the classroom. When teachers perform well, it is reflected in students' knowledge gains and character growth, which in turn elevates the overall quality of education. Generally, "performance" refers to the results of one's work; in the teaching context, this term denotes the extent to which teachers effectively carry out their instructional duties. Accordingly, the overall effectiveness of educators is crucial to the success of educational initiatives (Mukaddamah, 2024)—only when teachers excel in their roles can students truly improve their learning and schools produce high-quality outcomes. However, poor teacher performance remains a common issue in many schools, and it has the potential to adversely affect student achievement.

This is where the role of school leadership becomes crucial. Hidayatuloh (2023) observes that principals who do not employ transformational or other supportive leadership styles often fail to inspire their teachers to reach their highest potential, which contributes to subpar classroom performance. Without clear guidance, inspiration, or encouragement from the school administration, teachers may lose motivation to innovate in their teaching. Conversely, when principals provide strong and supportive leadership, teachers are more likely to thrive. Mallisa (2023) highlights that strong principal leadership is essential for improving teacher effectiveness and professionalism, which is crucial for advancing the quality of education in Indonesia. In particular, a principal who adopts a transformational leadership style can inspire educators to think creatively, adapt their teaching to the needs of modern students, and use their imagination in the classroom. By fostering such innovation and dedication among staff, effective school leadership helps develop more competent teachers and ultimately enhances the overall quality of education.

As leaders of their schools, principals are expected to fulfill their leadership responsibilities to achieve the school's vision and goals (Tanjung et al., 2021). Among the many factors influencing teachers' capacity to excel, effective school leadership stands out—a principal's leadership style can directly influence teacher efficacy and performance. Leadership itself is commonly defined as the process of influencing a group of people to work together toward a common goal (Northouse, 2015). A leader's particular style refers to the way they approach guiding and motivating others, and this style is shaped by personal characteristics as well as situational factors (Angelina, 2021). In an era of rapid change in education, transformational leadership has emerged as a particularly viable and effective approach for school principals. Transformational leadership is characterized by a leader's ability to inspire subordinates to put collective needs and interests above their own, often by motivating them through a shared vision and recognizing their contributions (Supandi, 2023). In practice, a principal who leads in a transformational manner seeks to drive positive change by empowering teachers and acknowledging their efforts, thereby aligning the entire school with its improvement goals.

In educational settings, effective transformational leaders exhibit several distinct qualities. Palembangan and Sihotang (2023) identify seven key traits of successful transformational school leaders: they see themselves as agents of change, show courage in their actions, trust others, act based on core values rather than personal interest, continually strive to improve their skills, handle complex or uncertain situations adeptly, and maintain a clear, visionary outlook for the future. Armed with these traits, transformational principals are well-equipped to lead meaningful improvements in their schools. One crucial responsibility of a transformational leader is to bring about positive change. To accomplish this, principals must communicate their vision effectively and build trust with their teachers; by doing so, they can motivate the entire school staff to work together toward common goals and ultimately foster better student achievement.

Empirical evidence further underscores the link between principal leadership and teacher performance. Faradila (2024) found that strong principal leadership can significantly improve teachers' performance, although that study also noted that leadership alone is not sufficient to guarantee lasting changes in classroom practice unless it is consistently applied. In inclusive educational settings, where students' needs are diverse, the role of leadership appears even more critical. Eduan (2024) observed that a principal's leadership was a key determinant of teacher success in meeting the demands of a diverse student body.

However, despite considerable research on educational leadership, certain gaps remain. Little is known about how different leadership styles might interact with each other or operate under various school conditions to affect teacher effectiveness. In addition, few studies have examined how principals' leadership styles influence teachers' job satisfaction or translate into students' academic success (Duraku & Hoxha, 2021). In light of these gaps, this article aims to synthesize findings from recent studies that investigate the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teacher performance. The goal is to integrate current evidence to better understand how principals' transformational leadership practices are linked to improvements in teacher effectiveness and, by extension, student outcomes.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive literature review methodology, focusing on synthesizing existing empirical research related to principals' transformational leadership styles and their impact on teacher performance. The stages of the review followed the framework proposed by Helmina and Giatman (2023), which includes: (1) developing a research question; (2) searching for relevant literature; (3) reviewing the selected literature; and (4) analyzing the findings. The guiding research question was: "How does the transformational leadership style of the principal affect teacher performance at school?" This question directed the literature selection and ensured alignment with the study's purpose.

The authors systematically searched for literature using Google Scholar as the primary source, applying the following keywords: "transformational leadership style," "principal," and "teacher performance." The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) studies published between 2018 and 2024; (b) empirical research articles that directly examined the relationship between principal leadership styles and teacher performance; (c) articles published in peer-reviewed journals or reputable academic outlets; and (d) studies published in English or Indonesian. Exclusion criteria included theoretical essays, editorials, book reviews, or articles that mentioned the keywords without addressing the specified relationship in their findings.

A total of 18 empirical studies were ultimately reviewed in this study. This adjustment was made to ensure inclusion of the most current and relevant research, including a few exceptional studies published slightly outside the five-year window (e.g., Kuswaeri, 2016) and several early-access studies from 2024 (e.g., Mukaddamah, 2024; Junaidin et al., 2024) that were deemed critical for contextual completeness. After selecting the articles, the authors extracted key data points from each study, including research objectives, methodology, context, and major findings. These findings were then synthesized and thematically categorized into three dominant areas: (1) direct effects of transformational leadership on teacher performance, (2) mediating factors such as motivation, commitment, and discipline, and (3) the influence of school culture in strengthening leadership outcomes. A summary table (Table 1) was created to present the core findings from each reviewed study.

This narrative review approach was chosen to allow flexibility in integrating diverse study designs and educational contexts. Although it does not adopt formal systematic protocols such as PRISMA, the methodology was guided by transparency, repeatability, and thematic clarity. The focus on both Indonesian and international contexts provides a broader understanding of how transformational leadership practices influence teacher effectiveness across educational settings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the literature on the topic of how principals' leadership styles affect teacher productivity yielded the following findings.

Table 1. The results of the article analysis of the effect of the principal's transformational leadership style on teacher performance

No.	Author	Research Title	Review Results
1.	Sukerti and Sudianing (2023)	Transformative Leadership at SMP Negeri 3 Singaraja: The Principal's Approach to Raising Faculty Achievement	The principal's leadership style greatly determines the extent to which SMP Negeri 3 Singaraja achieves its vision, goals, and objectives. A principal's ability to lead is greatly enhanced when the school community actively backs the principal's program.
2.	Akbar and Imaniyati (2019)	The impact of the principal's dynamic style of leadership on the effectiveness of the faculty	There is a favorable and statistically significant correlation between leaders utilizing transformational leadership approaches and increased teacher effectiveness. How a principal's use of transformational leadership styles impacts student success in the classroom is no different.
3.	Adzkiya (2020)	The effect of principal transformational leadership style, school climate and teacher professional commitment on teacher performance	How a principal fosters a transformative learning environment and interacts with teachers has a significant impact on teacher dedication and classroom performance.
4.	Efendi et al. (2023)	The affectiveness of principal transformational leadership trough work commitment on teacher performance independent learning	Teacher's dedication and succes in implementing independent learning is driven by principal's use of transformational leadership styles. The study found that teachers' work commitment and their performance in implementing an independent curriculum are interelated. Interestingly, transformational leadership style was found to mediate this relationship and also affectively foster work commitment among independent learning teachers.
5.	Mukaddamah (2024)	The role of principal transformational leadership in improving teacher performance: A case study in an elementary school	Trough a number of channles, transformational leadership significantly influences educator effectiveness, Principals who practice transformational leadership can inspire their staff to continue inclusive work environment.

No.	Author	Research Title	Review Results
6.	Alexander (2023)	Exploring the impact of the principal's transformational leadership style and organizational culture on teacher performance at SMK Panca Drahrma Balikpapan via the lens of work discipline	At SMK Panca Dharma, the principal's leadership style has a direct and beneficial influence on teacher performance
7.	Rasidin et al. (2022)	Analysis of the connection between public junior high school teachers' effectiveness in the Luragung Cluster and the principals' transformational leadership and organizational culture in Kuningan Regency	In the Kuningan district of Gugus Luragung, transformational leadership and organizational culture had a favorable effect on public junior high school instructors. Transformative leadership may assist administrators better understand their school's setting and the difficulties they encounter.
8.	Supandi (2023)	The effect of principal transformational leadership on teacher performance	The principal's ability to lead with change has an impact on the staff's and teachers' productivity. The findings indicate that a principal's capacity to effectively apply transformational leadership impacts the quality of school administration, which in turn impacts staff and teacher performance.
9.	Wijayanto et al. (2021)	The impact of a transformational leadership style, intrinsic motivation, and work happiness on the effectiveness of primary school educators	Individual and collective work happines levels, work motivation, and transformational leadership style all have a positive and substantial impact on teachers' classroom performance.
10.	Joen et al. (2022)	The effect of principal transformational leadership on teacher performance through teacher work motivation	Teacher are more motivated to perfom well when their principals apply a transformational leadership style. The transformational leadership of the principal of SMP Negeri 5 Gowa result in improved education quality. Teachers can improve their performance and feel more empowered when principals use transformational leadership styles that influence their performance and motivation at work.
11.	Junaidin et al. (2024)	The Effect of principal transformational leadership on teacher performance in islamic education learning	Teachers' effectiveness, particularly in introducing self-directed learning, increases when principals adopt a transformational leadership style, according to this research. Teachers' dedication to their jobs correlates

No.	Author	Research Title	Review Results
			with how well they execute the self-paced curriculum, according to the research. This research concluded that administrators that use a transformational leadership style are better able to mediate the connection between leadership style and the performance of self-directed learning instructors and to increase teachers' job commitment.
12.	Sugiarto et al. (2020)	The impact of principals' transformative leadership on teachers' ability to learn independently via their dedication to their jobs	If we want educators in North Jakarta to have the greatest impact on improving student learning, we need to raise the bar on transformational leadership and workplace motivation.
13.	Juwantini et al. (2022)	The impact of principals' transformational leadership and employees' intrinsic motivation on the effectiveness of vocational education programs in north Jakarta State	Discipline in the classroom is influenced by transformational leadership. Workplace discipline and transformative leadership both have a mediation function that affects teacher performance indirectly.
14.	Alzoraiki et al. (2023)	Teaching staff dedication to the link between transformative leadership and long-term success in the classroom	This study's results are consistent with those of Alzoraiki et al. (2023), who discovered that a 43.7% improvement in performance was achieved when job satisfaction was combined with transformational leadership. For that reason, the effectiveness of the principal's leadership is crucial to the success of the teaching staff.
15.	Hashim et al. (2023)	Principal Teacher Transformation Leadership and Teacher Job Satisfaction of Transformation 25 Schools in Jasin District Melaka	Teachers' work happiness and performance are favorably impacted by the principal's transformative leadership, according to the research. This data reveals that instructors are more invested and successful in their work when administrators exhibit motivating leadership, personalized attention, and intellectual stimulation.
16.	Muliati et al. (2022)	Elementary School Teachers Performance: How the Role of Transformational Leadership, Competency, and Self-Efficacy?	The study concludes that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, demonstrating that principals who inspire, motivate, and guide teachers effectively can enhance their overall effectiveness in the learning process. Moreover, principals' leadership that fosters confidence, self-efficacy, and motivation among teachers contributes to improved performance and organizational success.

No.	Author	Research Title	Review Results
17.	Annabila et al. (2023)	Merdeka curiculum at the driving school: The contribution of principal's transformational leadership and school culture to junior school teachers' performance	Principal's and school culture both demnstrated very high level of transformational leadership. While additional fectors beyond the researcher's scope accounted for 57.6% of the variance in teacher effectiveness in implementing the autonomous curriculum, transformational leadership and school culture accounted for 42.4%.
18.	Kuswaeri (2016)	Contribution of principal transformational leadership transformational leadership to work motivation of junior high school teachers in Sumedang Regency	The principal's transformative leadership style is directly responsible for the motivated instructors. The rincipal's transformative leadership style produces motivated instructors. When principals use a transformational leadership style, teachers are more motivated to put in extra effort in the classroom.

A number of studies in various fields have examined the impact of school administrators' transformational leadership on teacher effectiveness. Some important conclusions are relevant to the research subject according to the review table. "How the impact of the transformational leadership style owned by the principal can affect teacher performance at school?"

3.1. Direct Effect of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance

Transformational leadership theory, first articulated by Burns (1978) and further expanded by Bass (1985), posits that effective leaders engage with their followers by creating a shared vision, encouraging innovation, and addressing individual needs. Within educational settings, this leadership style has been strongly linked to improved teacher performance. Principals who employ transformational leadership practices tend to demonstrate four key components which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994), all of which contribute to enhanced teacher engagement and instructional effectiveness.

Multiple empirical studies affirm this theoretical alignment. Adzkiya (2020), Akbar and Imaniyati (2019), Supandi (2023), and Wijayanto et al. (2021) all demonstrate that principals who adopt transformational leadership styles foster a supportive and motivating school environment. This not only improves morale and trust among teachers but also translates into greater professional accountability and improved instructional practices. Mukaddamah (2024) corroborates this by highlighting that transformational leadership contributes to increased teacher job satisfaction and commitment, while Alzoraiki et al. (2023) argue that such leadership directly correlates with long-term improvements in teacher effectiveness.

Transformational leadership also nurtures a shared vision and a collective sense of mission, both of which are pivotal in mobilizing teachers toward educational goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). These leadership behaviors are especially important in dynamic and high-pressure school environments, where teachers often face curriculum reforms, administrative demands, and diverse student needs. By fostering trust, intellectual growth, and emotional support, transformational principals empower teachers to improve pedagogical strategies and classroom performance.

While these findings consistently support the positive impact of transformational leadership, it is important to recognize methodological limitations in the reviewed studies. Most are cross-sectional and context-specific—frequently limited to public schools in Indonesia—making it difficult to establish causality or generalize findings across broader educational systems. In addition, few studies systematically contrast transformational leadership with other models, such as instructional leadership which focuses more on curriculum and learning outcomes or distributed leadership which emphasizes shared decision-making. Future research should consider mixed-method and longitudinal designs to provide more nuanced and generalizable insights into the

mechanisms by which transformational leadership affects teacher performance across different school types and cultural contexts.

3.2. Mediator Factors That Strengthen the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Performance

Transformational leadership does not operate in isolation; its impact on teacher performance is reinforced through several psychological and organizational mediating factors. These mediators—such as teacher commitment, work discipline, and motivation—act as vital mechanisms that translate leadership behaviors into measurable improvements in teacher effectiveness. Theoretically, this aligns with Bass and Avolio's (1994) Full Range Leadership Model, which emphasizes that transformational leaders influence followers by inspiring intrinsic motivation, shaping organizational values, and reinforcing professional identity.

Work commitment emerges as one of the most crucial mediators. Teachers who perceive their principals as transformational leaders tend to demonstrate higher organizational commitment, dedication, and willingness to go beyond formal job expectations. Efendi et al. (2023) revealed that principals who exhibit vision-oriented leadership and provide emotional and professional support foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among teachers. This sense of commitment enhances teacher resilience and persistence, even in challenging environments. In line with Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of commitment which are affective, continuance, and normative—transformational principals predominantly nurture affective commitment, where teachers remain motivated because they genuinely identify with the school's vision and goals.

Work discipline serves as another reinforcing mechanism. Effective transformational leaders model ethical standards, accountability, and self-regulation—behaviors that teachers are likely to emulate. Alexander (2023) and Juwantini et al. (2022) found that transformational principals improve teacher discipline by establishing clear expectations, consistent communication, and fair evaluation systems. This disciplined culture indirectly supports classroom management and instructional quality. As teachers internalize the principal's expectations, they become more consistent in their instructional delivery and professional conduct, creating a ripple effect on student learning outcomes. This reflects Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, which asserts that individuals learn appropriate behaviors by observing credible and respected role models.

Work motivation, however, remains the most frequently cited and theoretically robust mediator. Transformational leaders cultivate motivation by addressing teachers' intrinsic needs for autonomy, mastery, and purpose (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Studies by Hashim et al. (2023), Joen et al. (2022), Kuswaeri (2016), Muliati et al. (2022), and Sugiarto et al. (2020) collectively indicate that principals who provide intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration enable teachers to find meaning in their work. This intrinsic motivation leads to improved creativity, collaboration, and a willingness to innovate within classrooms. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with self-determination theory, suggesting that supportive leadership nurtures intrinsic motivation and fosters long-term professional engagement.

These mediators illustrate how transformational leadership amplifies teacher performance through interlinked cognitive and emotional pathways. Effective principals recognize that achieving sustained performance outcomes requires more than strategic vision, it involves cultivating internal motivation, nurturing commitment, and modeling discipline. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that most reviewed studies predominantly report positive relationships, with limited exploration of alternative leadership frameworks. For instance, instructional or distributed leadership may complement transformational practices by providing structure and shared accountability (Hallinger, 2011; Spillane, 2006). Future research should therefore integrate comparative and longitudinal analyses to uncover whether these leadership combinations yield sustained impacts across diverse educational contexts.

3.3. The Role of School Culture in Strengthening Transformational Leadership

The role of school culture is pivotal in determining the extent to which transformational leadership practices can be effectively realized. A positive, collaborative, and vision-oriented school culture serves as fertile ground for transformational leadership to flourish, while weak or fragmented cultures can undermine even the most capable leaders. Theoretically, this aligns with Schein's (2010) organizational culture model, which

emphasizes that leadership and culture are mutually reinforcing processes. Leaders shape culture through their values, communication, and decisions, and in turn, culture sustains leadership behaviors over time.

A strong and cohesive school culture provides shared norms and values that align the actions of teachers and administrators toward collective goals. Annabila et al. (2023) and Rasidin et al. (2022) found that when principals cultivate a culture based on trust, collaboration, and continuous improvement, teachers are more likely to internalize the school's vision and translate it into effective pedagogical practice. Transformational leaders establish this foundation by communicating a compelling vision, empowering teachers to innovate, and celebrating shared successes. Such practices build what Deal and Peterson (2016) describe as the "symbolic dimension of leadership," wherein principals use rituals, language, and narratives to embed values of excellence and mutual respect into daily school life.

Furthermore, the interaction between leadership and culture can be conceptualized through the lens of Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions theory. In collectivist contexts such as Indonesia, a culture that values harmony, respect for authority, and community orientation naturally complements transformational leadership. Principals who are culturally sensitive and empathetic are more likely to align leadership practices with teachers' shared social values, thereby enhancing relational trust and commitment (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). This dynamic interplay allows transformational leadership to operate not merely as a managerial process but as a cultural catalyst that transforms the ethos of the school.

Empirical evidence underscores that school culture acts as a moderator between leadership and teacher performance. In schools with supportive and adaptive cultures, transformational leadership behaviors such as intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration have stronger effects on teacher motivation and instructional quality (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Hallinger, 2011). Conversely, in rigid or hierarchical environments, transformational initiatives may face resistance, limiting their potential impact. Therefore, principals must function as "cultural architects," deliberately shaping values and practices that sustain professional collaboration, openness to change, and reflective practice.

The development of an empowering culture also fosters collective efficacy among teachers, an essential component of school improvement (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). When teachers perceive that their peers and leaders are committed to shared goals, they develop stronger collective beliefs in their capacity to influence student outcomes. Transformational principals facilitate this by promoting professional learning communities, open communication, and distributed decision-making. In doing so, they move beyond hierarchical control toward shared leadership, ensuring that cultural transformation accompanies leadership transformation.

However, while the literature overwhelmingly supports the symbiotic relationship between leadership and school culture, there is limited empirical research exploring how specific cultural subdimensions such as trust, innovation, or collaboration mediate the leadership-performance nexus. Future studies could adopt mixed-method designs to examine how cultural alignment enhances the sustainability of transformational leadership practices over time.

4.   CONCLUSION

This literature review finds that transformational leadership is a central element in enhancing teacher performance and the overall quality of education. The reviewed studies consistently indicate that principals who apply transformational leadership principles such as vision, motivation, and personal support achieve better outcomes in teacher engagement, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness. The evidence also shows that teacher motivation, discipline, and commitment play an important mediating role, while a supportive school culture serves as a key contextual factor that strengthens the effectiveness of leadership.

In theoretical terms, this review supports the foundational ideas of Bass (1985) and Burns (1978). Transformational leaders go beyond administrative duties by encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and emotional connection among teachers. When these principles are integrated within a cooperative school environment, leadership becomes transformative in nature. This combination shapes shared values, promotes long-term growth, and strengthens the organization's ability to adapt to change. Without the mutual

reinforcement between leadership and culture, a vision may lose its sustainability, and a culture without visionary leadership may fail to progress.

The review also identifies several gaps that remain in the existing body of research. The predominance of cross-sectional studies limits the ability to determine cause-and-effect relationships. Furthermore, most of the available research has been conducted within Indonesian and collectivist contexts, which reduces the global applicability of the findings. Future studies are encouraged to use longitudinal and mixed-method approaches and to include diverse cultural and educational settings. Researchers are also encouraged to examine how transformational leadership interacts with other models such as distributed, instructional, and ethical leadership in order to determine which combinations are most effective in addressing contemporary challenges in education.

From a practical perspective, educational policymakers and institutions should provide programs that develop leadership abilities such as empathy, communication, adaptability, and self-reflection. Leadership training should focus on helping principals cultivate emotional intelligence and the capacity to inspire and guide their staff. Such efforts will contribute to the creation of innovative, collaborative, and values-based school environments where teachers and students can excel.

In conclusion, transformational leadership functions as both the driving force and the sustaining mechanism of educational improvement. When leadership behaviors are aligned with teacher empowerment and a responsive school culture, principals can build dynamic learning communities that support continuous professional development, student success, and the long-term advancement of educational institutions.

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