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PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING MOTIVATION AS PREDICTORS OF TEAMWORK IN PERUVIAN REGULAR BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

As key figures in the school environment, principals have a profound impact on the professional development of their teachers. With direct implications for real-world educational settings, this research aimed to determine if principal leadership and teacher motivation are associated with teamwork in Peruvian regular basic education teachers. The research design consisted of a predictive cross-sectional design. Nine hundred thirty-five Peruvian teachers at the initial, primary, and secondary levels were surveyed using questionnaires that assessed their perceptions of principal leadership, teaching motivation, and teamwork. The results, which have practical implications for improving teamwork, showed that principal leadership and teacher motivation positively affect the teamwork of regular basic education teachers. The findings indicate that teamwork variability is statistically explained by principal leadership and teacher motivation in Peruvian teachers of regular basic education. It is recommended that improvement strategies be applied to management leaders and academic motivation to enhance collaborative work skills in Peruvian teachers.

Keywords: Principal leadership, teacher motivation, teamwork, Peruvian teachers, regular basic education teachers.



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INTRODUCTION

As key figures in the school organization, principals exert a profound influence on the professional development of teachers and, indirectly, on student learning outcomes (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). It is the principals who facilitate the learning of both teachers and students (Bellibaş & Gümüş, 2023). The principal's authority and his control of school resources place him in a unique position to create favorable working conditions to develop teachers' capacity and their teamwork (Hendawy Al-Mahdy et al., 2024).

Leadership in a school organization is crucial to long-term success, especially teacher motivation (Mohd Siraj et al., 2023). Previous studies confirm that principal leadership styles are related to the desired outcomes of both teachers and students (Stavrou & Kafa, 2024). Principal leadership based on learning influences teaching practices and confirms a positive link between principals' leadership and teaching practice (Er, 2024).

Principal leadership is defined as a process in which guidance is provided to subordinates in decisions and actions that support leadership objectives (Bell et al., 2014). In addition to being characterized by promoting school resources to fulfill the mission and vision (Murphy & Torre, 2015), principal leadership supports the management of instructional programs for student development (Hitt & Tucker, 2016), facilitates the professional development of teachers (Murphy, 2015), and empowers teachers (Leithwood et al., 2020a).

Among contemporary approaches to school leadership, transformational leadership has been widely recognized as one of the most influential models in education (Kaya & Koçyiğit, 2023). This approach is characterized by the principal's ability to exert idealized influence, provide inspirational motivation, intellectually stimulate teachers, and offer individualized consideration (Geijsel et al., 2003). Various studies have confirmed that transformational leadership is positively related to teacher engagement, improved pedagogical practices, and the development of a collaborative school culture (Hyseni Duraku & Hoxha, 2021a). Therefore, the principal not only fulfills an administrative role but also acts as an agent who implements shared goals and strengthens collaborative work.

The literature confirms the relationship between the principal's leadership and the motivation of regular basic education teachers (Haxhihyseni et al., 2023a). Qualified, motivated, and empowered teachers play a central role in children's education and are influenced by the school's organizational climate and principal leadership styles and practices (Hyseni Duraku & Hoxha, 2021b). Previous studies confirm the relationship between the principal's leadership and motivation, as well as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation (Eyal & Roth, 2011; Haxhihyseni et al., 2023). Furthermore, when principals promote the professional development of their teachers, they create a climate of trust that strengthens teachers' sense of competence and self-efficacy (Geijsel et al., 2003), which ultimately strengthens their engagement.

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) provides an explanatory framework for understanding the mechanisms by which principal leadership can influence teacher motivation. This theory shows that motivation increases when three needs are met: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Particularly in the academic environment, principal behaviors can either facilitate or hinder these needs, depending on participation, recognition, and interpersonal support (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). Recent studies show that the principal's motivational style directly influences the satisfaction of these needs and the teacher's job motivation (Wu, 2023). Consequently, meeting psychological needs can not only strengthen teacher motivation but also promote collaborative commitment.

In educational contexts where academic demands and changes are more constant, principals play a fundamental role in the implementation of collaborative practices and collaborative professional environments. Principals can support teachers' teamwork, involving teachers in decision-making processes and sharing responsibilities with them (Rikkerink et al., 2016). It is through interaction that principals can support teacher collaboration and provide



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opportunities for collaboration (Ala-Laurinaho et al., 2017). Teamwork is analyzed from a participatory and collaborative management perspective (Al-Momani & Jubran, 2024). Thus, the expectations of decision-making and implementation of academic supervision programs are met in the promotion of teamwork (Herman & Osamah Ibrahim Khalaf, 2024). Studies of a qualitative nature revealed four effective practices of school principals in Malaysia, including planning mission, vision, and objectives, organizing professional development programs, and promoting a culture of innovation, collaboration, and teamwork (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020a). Likewise, studies show some fundamental tensions around directors' understanding of their leadership roles in a team context (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). Beyond its influence on individual motivation, principal leadership also shapes collective organizational processes such as teamwork.

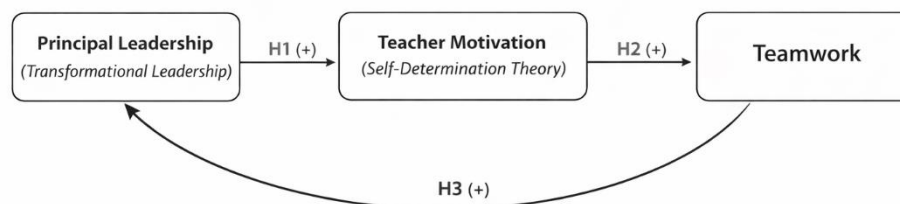
Although the literature has documented the relationship between principal leadership and teacher motivation (Eyal & Roth, 2011), as well as leadership and teamwork (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020b), these variables have generally been studied in isolation and not within an integrated model. Furthermore, empirical evidence comes primarily from Asian, European, and American contexts, with research in Latin American educational systems, particularly in basic education, remaining limited. Therefore, it is important to analyze the relationship between leadership and teaching motivation in relation to teamwork, integrating transformational leadership theory and self-determination theory into a unified conceptual model. Thus, this study contributes to the literature on educational leadership and management by examining the direct and indirect effects of principal leadership and teacher motivation within a national context.

In Peru, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, national educational systems suffered sudden economic, technological, and organizational changes (Miranda et al., 2021). In a context where regular basic education already showed limitations (Carranza Esteban et al., 2022; Santos Anaya & Duffó, 2024), examining these relationships in Peru contributes to expanding empirical evidence from underrepresented educational contexts.

This research aimed to determine if principal leadership and teacher motivation are associated with teamwork in Peruvian regular basic education teachers. Based on transformational leadership theory and self-determination theory, this research proposes that principal leadership and teacher motivation improve teamwork among teachers in regular basic education.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of the Relationships Between Principal Leadership, Teacher Motivation, And Teamwork.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

Predictive cross-sectional design. The research allows us to know the predictive factors of teamwork based on statistical analysis (Ato et al., 2013).

Participants

Through non-probabilistic convenience sampling, the voluntary participation of 935 Peruvian regular basic education teachers, aged 25 to 60, belonging to public and private institutions, at the initial, primary, and secondary



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levels was sought. Due to the non-probability and voluntary sampling method, self-selection bias is likely, as teachers with a greater interest in the topic may have been likelier to participate. Therefore, the generalizability of the results is approached with caution, and external validity is specifically limited to the population of Peruvian teachers in regular basic education with similar sociodemographic characteristics.

Table 1 shows that 60.7% of the participants are women, 39.3% are men in the sample taken, and the age interval between 30 and 49 is 47.3%. Of the level where they work, 39.9% are at the secondary level, 38.2% at the primary level, and 21.9% at the initial level. And finally, 63.3% work in a state educational institution, and 36.7% work in a private educational institution.

Table 1
Sociodemographic Information

(n=935)		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female	568	60.7%
	Male	367	39.3%
Age	Less than 25 years	66	7.1%
	From 25 to 29 years	72	7.7%
	From 30 to 34 years	118	12.6%
	From 35 to 39 years	137	14.7%
	From 40 to 44 years	166	17.8%
	From 45 to 49 years	138	14.8%
	From 50 to 54 years	95	10.2%
	From 55 to 59 years	99	10.6%
Educational level of work	From 60 to more years	44	4.7%
	Preschool	205	21.9%
	Primary	357	38.2%
	Secondary	373	39.9%
Condition of the educational institution	State educational institution	592	63.3%
	Private educational institution	343	36.7%

Data Collection Tools

Three instruments were used to collect the required data: one to measure the *principal leadership*, another for teaching motivation, and the third to measure teamwork. The principal leadership instrument was developed, adapted, and validated by (Moreno-Casado et al., 2021), which has 34 items grouped into the dimensions: idealized behavioral influence (6, 14, 21, 32), attributed ideality influence (10, 17, 19, 23), inspirational motivation (9, 13, 24, 34), intellectual stimulation (2, 8, 28, 30), individualized consideration (15, 18, 27, 29), contingent reward (1, 11, 16, 33), active management by exception (4, 20, 22, 25), passive leadership (3, 5, 7, 12, 26, 31). The responses were constructed according to a Likert-type scale, with the denominations: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5).

The variable instrument teaching motivation, whose evaluation and validation process corresponds to (Abós et al., 2018), has 19 items subjected to multigroup confirmatory factor analysis, with reliability greater than 0.70. The teaching motivation variable presents its four dimensions and its twenty-six items: identified regulation (2, 3, 13, 16), introjected regulation (4, 9, 11, 12), external regulation (6, 7, 10, 15), demotivation (17, 18, 19, negative items), whose responses were established according to a Likert-type scale, with the denominations: strongly disagree (1),



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disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5). The instruments will be applied virtually for three months.

The third variable is teamwork; it belongs to (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2021), who developed and analyzed the instrument's psychometric properties and measurement scales. The instrument presents 23 items, which have been organized into respective dimensions: learning community, with 10 items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; collaboration and cooperation with 9 items: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19; functional diversity with 4 items: 20, 21, 22, 23. The responses were determined using the Likert scale, with the following denominations: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) agree, and 5) strongly agree.

A questionnaire was designed and socialized through the virtual platform of Microsoft Forms through WhatsApp and Facebook groups of regular basic education teachers. The study's objective was presented in the first part of the online questionnaire, informed consent approval was requested, voluntary, anonymous participation was encouraged, and the information collected was only used for research purposes.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data through the respective instruments to test the hypotheses, the data were analyzed in Excel software, and the data were processed in SPSS. The tables corresponding to each hypothesis were generated, allowing the respective analyses and interpretations. The correlation analysis was performed using the Pearson coefficient, and a regression model was estimated, calculating the TE based on the coefficient of determination (R^2) and its confidence intervals.

The study followed the standards stipulated in the Declaration of Helsinki and was also approved by the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of the Universidad Peruana Unión (Reference: CE-EPG-000126). Voluntary and anonymous participation was also considered.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, such as the mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis. The highest average is in the variable Leadership of the principal, the lowest average is in the variable Teacher motivation, and the greatest dispersion is found in the variable Leadership of the principal. Moreover, skewness values ranged between -1.16 and 0.30 , and kurtosis values were within ± 1.5 , indicating an approximately symmetrical distribution.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of the Variables Principal Leadership, Teaching Motivation, and Teamwork

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Principal leadership	118.07	18.91	-0.65	1.09
Teaching motivation	70.12	7.05	0.30	1.38
Teamwork	85.504	14.22	-1.16	1.49

In Table 3, the relationship between the variables Principal leadership and Teacher Motivation is observed with a result of 0.240 ($p < 0.01$), which is a positive, direct, and highly significant relationship, as is the relationship between Principal leadership and Teamwork, which is 0.696 ($p < 0.01$), on the other hand, no significant relationship was found between Teacher Motivation and Teamwork which is 0.011 ($p > 0.05$). Although the correlations between the variables were of low to moderate magnitude, the regression coefficients were highly significant. This is due, on the one hand, to the large sample size ($n = 935$), which provides high statistical power to detect small effects; and, on the other hand, to the fact that each variable is associated with unique variance in teamwork when statistically



controlling for the other variable (partial associations).

Table 3

Analysis of the Correlation Between the Principal's Leadership, Teacher Motivation, and Teamwork

	Principal leadership	Teaching motivation	Teamwork
Principal leadership	1		
Teaching motivation	0.240 **	1	
Teamwork	0.696 **	0.011	1

**The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).

Table 4 shows the model summary, where the corrected coefficient of determination (corrected R²) is 0.509. This indicates that Principal leadership and Teaching motivation variables explain 50.9% of the variability of Teamwork. The F value of the ANOVA (F=484.432, p=0.000) indicates that the overall regression model shows a statistically significant linear association among the study variables.

Table 4

Multiple Correlation Coefficients R, R², Corrected R², EE And F

Model	R	R ²	R ² corrected	EE	F	p-value
1	0.714	0.510	0.509	9.969	484.432	0.000

a. Explanatory variables: Principal leadership, Teacher motivation

b. Outcome variable: Teamwork

Table 5 shows the regression coefficients. Principal leadership was positively associated with teamwork (B = 0.553, SE = 0.018, β = 0.735, t = 31.12, p < .001, 95% CI [0.518, 0.588]). Teacher motivation also showed a positive association (B = 0.334, SE = 0.048, β = 0.165, t = 7.01, p < .001, 95% CI [0.240, 0.427]). The effect of leadership is large (β = .735), while that of motivation is small to moderate (β = .165).

The collinearity indices were adequate (Tolerance = .943 for both variables; VIF = 1.061), well below the usual cut-off points (VIF < 5–10), so there is no evidence of problematic multicollinearity.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Coefficients B (Not Standardized), B (Standardized) And T-Test

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	β			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-3.208	4.364		-0.735	0.462	-11.772	5.356		
Principal leadership	0.553	0.018	0.735	31.123	0.000	0.518	0.588	0.943	1.061



Teacher motivation	0.334	0.048	0.165	7.005	0.000	0.240	0.427	0.943	1.061
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a. Dependent Variable: Teamwork

DISCUSSION

Teamwork has been analyzed for several years (Kelchtermans, 2006). Its importance is related to all the actions teachers take to achieve the objectives of their professional work (Weinstein et al., 2023). The literature confirms that teamwork is essential for organized professional development. (Evans, 2019; Nurhuda et al., 2023) However, some teachers do not participate in this experience (Horn & Little, 2010). This research aimed to determine if principal leadership and teaching motivation are associated with teamwork in Peruvian regular basic education teachers.

The results confirm that teamwork is explained by the variables of principal leadership and teacher motivation in regular basic education teachers. This means that highly collaborative teachers perceive principal leadership and academic motivation. This result is confirmed in the literature, which states that strong leadership from principals encourages collaborative work among teachers (Coburn, 2005). Another study confirmed a positive relationship between the leadership behaviors of school principals, motivation, and an institution's work culture (Asad et al., 2022). In Peru, a study on managerial leadership found its effect on collaborative work (Boy Barreto et al., 2022). Another study confirmed that teachers' and administrators' participation is essential for academic motivation and that managers must establish a dialogue with their teachers to achieve greater collaborative work (Efe et al., 2023). A study explored the collaboration frameworks between teachers in basic education schools and found they were related to principal leadership (Jaguaco et al., 2022; Weddle, 2022). Studies also confirm the relationship between managerial leadership and academic motivation (Himmetoglu et al., 2018). School principals provide teachers with professional development and growth opportunities in organizational capabilities (Blaum & Tobin, 2019).

These findings also suggest that managerial decisions are not solely focused on administrative planning, but also on creating motivational conditions that strengthen teacher commitment. In this way, leadership practices become a key element in fostering cohesion within teaching teams.

Among the theoretical implications of this research, it is confirmed that educational managers play an important role in improving school institutions (Hernández de la Torre & Altopiedi, 2023). Motivation drives people toward achieving their goals (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Thus, the behavior of motivated teachers in the organization is characterized by a level of commitment affected by the educational principal (Effendy Pohan et al., 2023). Under the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985b), people are motivated by the need to grow and achieve satisfaction. These motivations can be intrinsic or extrinsic. In the case of schools, the managers must strive to develop and improve the intrinsic motivation of teachers with some extrinsic motivation to improve the school (O'neil, 1995; Wu, 2023b).

From an integrative perspective combining transformational leadership and self-determination theory, and in line with Geijsel et al. (2003) and Leithwood et al. (2020), the results confirm the importance of transformational leadership exercised by the principal in building a collaborative academic culture. Furthermore, the study broadens the perspective by incorporating the motivational axis based on the satisfaction of needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985a), showing that the principal's leadership not only influences teamwork but also acts through teacher motivation.

Among the practical implications is that organizations can implement programs that improve the organizational skills of school leaders to improve teamwork. On the other hand, the results have implications for educational governance in Peru, firstly by suggesting policies for the selection, evaluation, and professional development of principals, who should prioritize the necessary transformational leadership competencies geared towards teacher



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commitment and cohesion. Likewise, the training of academic leaders should incorporate motivational support strategies that promote collaborative and sustainable institutional environments. Likewise, these programs must involve strategies to increase teacher motivation. The findings highlight the need to provide teacher motivation and principal leadership to improve the teamwork necessary in educational institutions. In addition, education principals must ensure that educational leaders are trained in a separate field of specialization, as in other contexts (Arastaman et al., 2023).

In the Peruvian case, principals could implement training strategies to improve their leadership capabilities, program management, and teacher empowerment (Tan, 2024). This program would be applied over 6 months, with biweekly evaluations using the instruments used in this research. Similar research supports (Aas et al., 2020) the expectation that this program will improve the practice of managerial leadership and, thus, the teaching motivation and teamwork of Peruvian teachers

This research has some limitations. Firstly, the data were taken cross-sectionally, so it is impossible to establish causality between the variables. Longitudinal studies would be recommended to confirm the results of this research. On the other hand, although the sample is important, conducting studies in other contexts is necessary for optimal generalization of the results. All variables were measured using self-report questionnaires collected at a single point in time, which could increase the risk of common method bias and overstate the observed relationships between principal leadership, teacher motivation, and teamwork. Future research should consider probabilistic sampling strategies and the use of multiple data sources or longitudinal designs to strengthen the robustness of the findings. Concerning the instruments, it is necessary to establish additional psychometric tests for the managerial leadership questionnaire. Finally, the data were taken online and through self-reporting, so there could be some bias; however, self-reporting is the most used technique in social science studies (Demetriou et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research contributes to the teamwork theory and provides evidence that managerial leadership and teaching motivation are significantly associated with teamwork in Peruvian regular basic education teachers. Therefore, it is essential to establish strategies that improve perceptions of leadership and motivation to enhance institutional teamwork.

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Data Availability Statement

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

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.



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