

# Leadership Styles and School Management Effectiveness: Insights from Primary School Administrators in Klang, Selangor

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## Abstract

In primary schools, academic performance, collaboration with principals, and teachers' job satisfaction are among the top priorities for achieving effective school management. However, school administrators often face challenges in determining which of these priorities should take precedence. This study investigates the relationship between leadership styles and priorities in effective school management among primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor. It focuses on three key priorities: collaboration with principals, academic performance, and teachers' job satisfaction. The research employs a quantitative methodology, with the survey design tailored to capture detailed data on leadership styles and their relationship with effective school management. Stratified random sampling was applied to select 144 respondents from 54 public primary schools in Klang. The questionnaire assessed demographics, leadership styles (servant, transformational, transactional), and management priorities, with responses measured on a five-point Likert scale. Results reveal significant relationships between leadership styles and priorities in effective school management ( $r = 0.78$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Specifically, collaboration with principals (mean = 4.32, SD = 0.78) is the top priority among administrators, followed by teachers' job satisfaction (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.82) and academic performance (mean = 3.97, SD = 0.88). Servant leadership is the most applied leadership style, with a high mean score of 4.45 (SD = 0.76). The correlation analysis shows that transformational leadership is strongly associated with collaboration ( $r = 0.77$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), servant leadership with both collaboration ( $r = 0.86$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and academic performance ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and transactional leadership with teacher satisfaction ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, years of experience correlate weakly but significantly with collaboration and teacher satisfaction. The study concludes that a balanced leadership approach is crucial for effective school management. Transformational and servant leadership enhance collaboration and academic performance, while transactional leadership improves teacher satisfaction. These findings underscore the need for targeted professional

development and policy initiatives to train school leaders in diverse leadership styles, considering demographic factors to optimize educational outcomes in Klang, Selangor.

**Keywords:** Leadership Styles, Priorities, Effective School Management, Administration, Primary School

### **Introduction**

In Malaysia, the importance of effective school management is emphasized through various national policies, including the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) (KPM,2013). The PPPM aims to elevate the quality of education by focusing on leadership development and effective management strategies within schools. This emphasis on school management is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Effective school management is seen as a critical factor in achieving these educational objectives, as it directly impacts student outcomes, teacher satisfaction, and overall school performance.

One of the the transformation of education outlined in the Malaysian education blueprint 2013 to 2025 is to empower JPNs, PPDs, and schools to customize solutions based on need that allow greater school-based management and autonomy for schools that meet a minimum performance criteria (KPM,2013). The objective of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, is to enhance basic education (KPM, 2013). In line with international education policies, comprehensive transformation of the national education system can only be achieved through effective administrative systems.

School management is one factor that determines the quality of education (Lessa, Spier, and Felipe, 2018), as it indirectly influences the effectiveness of the curriculum, learning facilities and infrastructure, time, and learning processes (Salmagundi, 2015). From a management perspective, effective schools seek optimal utilization of all school components (Kompri, 2017).

Effective school management consists of several key components such as the effectiveness of the learning process, good school leadership, effective power management, having a cohesive and dynamic team, school autonomy, participation of school and community members, school transparency, and efficient resource utilization (Februannisa & Anggraini, 2022).

In Malaysian Education Quality Standard Wave 2 (SKPMg2), school management is covered in three different standards involving organizational management, curriculum, co-curricular activities, and student affairs. It serves as a guide to help schools plan, implement, review, monitor, and improve their operational methods and measures throughout the year. Continuous improvement processes can enhance the quality of leadership, organizational management, curriculum, co-curricular activities, and student affairs, ultimately impacting student outcomes as expected by the Ministry of Education (KPM,2016). SKPMg2 is provided by the Ministry of Education Malaysia as an effort to ensure educational institutions have standards that can be recognized and used as benchmarks by other countries.

Effective school leadership management can enhance the quality of education, create an innovative working environment, and strengthen leadership positions within educational

institutions (Ajigoena & Hisbullah, 2022). The Finnish approach to school management emphasizes autonomy and flexibility, allowing schools to independently plan, organize, and evaluate processes to enhance the quality of education (Paisol et al., 2021) which is aligned with MEB planned by the government. Accordingly, one of the Malaysian government's plans for effective school management includes the implementation of PLAN that covers four focuses, including empowering school management. School administrators play a crucial role in effective school management by overseeing various aspects of school operations and leadership. They are responsible for providing inputs to schools, ensuring the realization of educational goals, and creating a conducive learning environment (Dericioğlu, 2023). Effective administrators are expected to transition from mere managers to transformative leaders who drive school improvement (Arora & Awasthi, 2021). Furthermore, effective school management contributes to sustainable education and enhances relationships with the business world or industry, providing graduates with relevant work opportunities (Norhasanah et al., 2023).

In the Malaysian context, these align with the Malaysian Education Development Plan, which aims to elevate the quality of education by promoting leadership development and effective school management strategies. Understanding this is vital for improving school management practices and educational outcomes in primary schools in Klang, Selangor.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the Malaysian context, particularly in Klang, Selangor, there is a pressing need to understand the priorities of school administrators in managing their schools effectively. Priorities such as collaboration with principals, academic performance, and teachers' job satisfaction are critical components that influence the functioning of schools. However the lack of a clear understanding of which elements (academic performance, collaboration with the principal, or teachers' job satisfaction) administrators prioritize more can lead to inconsistencies in their management practices.

For instance, if an administrator prioritizes academic performance over teacher satisfaction, it might result in high academic achievements but low teacher morale, potentially leading to higher turnover rates and a negative impact on the school's culture. While emphasizing academic standards is crucial for student success (Chukwu, 2024), it is essential to consider the broader impact on teachers, school culture, and overall morale. Teacher morale is a critical factor that significantly influences the academic environment and, consequently, student achievement (Werang, 2024). Conversely, focusing primarily on teacher satisfaction without equal emphasis on academic performance might foster a positive working environment but at the cost of students' academic achievements. While satisfied teachers are generally associated with better instructional quality (Harrison et al., 2023), there is a need to ensure that this satisfaction does not result in a lowering of academic standards. Lowering expectations or reducing academic pressure on teachers to maintain their satisfaction levels can create a less rigorous academic environment, which may not adequately challenge students to reach their full potential (Han, 2023). Similarly, inadequate collaboration between the principal and teachers can result in miscommunication, reduced trust, and ineffective implementation of educational goals (Jing, 2021; Weerakoon, 2023; Ayeni & Ojo, 2022). These inconsistencies in management practices can create suboptimal outcomes, where some areas

may flourish while others suffer. Without a balanced and well-prioritized approach, the overall effectiveness of school management is compromised.

Moreover, the specific leadership styles that administrators adopt play a crucial role in influencing these outcomes. Studies by Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020), Anthony (2023) and Rini et al. (2020) explore how leadership styles influence conflict management effectiveness, teacher job satisfaction, and the implementation of digitalization systems in schools, respectively. Different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, or servant, can have varied impacts on academic performance, collaboration, and job satisfaction. Huang (2022) highlights the critical impact of leadership styles on academic achievement, teacher attitudes, turnover rates, and overall school climate (Huang, 2022). However, the specific leadership styles adopted by primary school administrators can significantly influence these outcomes. In Klang, Selangor, there is a need to understand how different leadership styles, specifically servant, transformational, and transactional leadership—affect key priorities in school management.

Despite various studies on leadership and management in education, there is limited research focusing on the interplay between these leadership styles and school management priorities within the context of primary schools in Klang. This gap hinders the ability of educational stakeholders to implement targeted strategies that enhance school management effectiveness. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive understanding of how different leadership styles can influence the prioritization and balance of these critical elements. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and the prioritization of academic performance, teachers' job satisfaction, and collaboration with principals in primary schools in Klang, Selangor, to provide actionable insights for more effective school management.

Accordingly, the objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between leadership styles (servant, transformational, and transactional) and priorities in effective school management (collaboration with principals, academic performance, and teachers' job satisfaction) among primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor. Specifically, this paper will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key priorities in effective school management as perceived by primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor?
2. What are the current leadership styles among primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor, and how do these styles impact the identified priorities in school management?

## **Literature Review**

### *Priorities in Effective School Management*

Effective school management is a multifaceted process that involves various aspects of organizational communication, internal and external management, leadership, technology integration, and strategic decision-making. The success of school management is closely tied to the empowerment of human resources and other resources to achieve school goals, as outlined by (Paulus et al., 2021).

Teacher job satisfaction is a pivotal factor in effective school management, as it directly correlates with enhanced academic performance and the overall quality of education. Principals play a critical role in shaping instructional practices that significantly affect teacher satisfaction (Kouali, 2017; Reta, 2019; Mbonea et al., 2021). When teachers are satisfied, they exhibit higher motivation and productivity, which positively impacts student learning experiences. This increased satisfaction not only improves teaching quality and organizational development but also boosts student performance (Gil-Flores, 2017; Lopes & Oliveira, 2020; Nhat, 2019; Hasanah et al., 2020). Engaged and motivated teachers foster a positive school climate, leading to improved teaching practices and enhanced student outcomes (Gupta & Gehlawat, 2013; Abidin & Alias, 2022; Hidayat et al., 2022; Orğan et al., 2021; Julidawati, 2023; Duan et al., 2018; Shrestha, 2019). Ultimately, high teacher job satisfaction contributes to a better learning environment, significantly influencing student success (Tiryakioğlu, 2024; Ali et al., 2016; Basnet & Sherpa, 2020). Additionally, a positive school climate not only enhances teacher satisfaction but also promotes optimal student learning outcomes (Noori, 2024).

Academic performance is a crucial aspect of effective school management as it directly impacts the overall success and quality of educational institutions. Research has shown that academic performance is influenced by various factors within the school environment. Factors such as academic competency, test competency, time management, study strategies, and instructional management strategies have been identified as significant predictors of academic performance (Hashmi, 2023; Ayeni, 2020). Their leadership attributes significantly contribute to academic performance, underscoring the importance of effective principalship for school productivity and student achievement (Emanuel et al., 2022).

Schools play a pivotal role in promoting academic performance and student success, as discussed by (Arnaiz-Sánchez et al., 2020). Effective schools are crucial in improving academic outcomes, challenging traditional beliefs about the determinants of academic success. Segkulu (2022), further explores school-related factors affecting academic performance, such as instructional materials, physical facilities, class sizes, pupil-teacher ratios, and teacher qualifications. Academic performance, reflecting student achievement levels, serves as a key indicator of instructional effectiveness and curriculum implementation. Achieving academic success is a primary goal in education, benefiting both learners and educational systems (Hayat et al., 2020).

Third criteria of effective school management involve collaboration with the principal. Collaborative leadership, where the principal assigns tasks and authority collaboratively, is essential for effective school management (Shohib, 2024). Principals need to work closely with school staff, families, and community members to create a conducive learning environment (Bryan et al., 2017). Effective schools seek to optimize the utilization of all components, including the principal, teachers, employees, and students, from a management perspective (Sunaengsih et al., 2019). The involvement of various levels of leadership, such as principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments, in collaborative learning activities is crucial for networked collaborative learning (Kempen & Steyn, 2016). Effective collaboration between school administrators and principals fosters a cohesive decision-making environment, enhancing school operations and student outcomes. Research has demonstrated that such collaboration can lead to improved decision-making processes, better resource allocation, and ultimately, enhanced student achievement (Kouali, 2017).

Moreover, the leadership practices of school leaders are crucial for fostering collaboration with teachers and students to achieve strong academic outcomes (Bakokonyane, 2023).

Understanding and prioritizing these aspects are vital for improving school management practices and educational outcomes. The Malaysian Education Development Plan highlights the importance of leadership development and effective school management strategies, aligning with the goals of this study. By investigating how school administrators in Klang, Selangor, prioritize these elements, the study aims to provide insights that can inform policy development, professional development programs, and decision-making processes. This research will not only contribute to the theoretical understanding of effective school management but also offer practical recommendations for enhancing the performance and well-being of educational institutions in the Malaysian context.

### **Leadership Styles**

Effective school leadership, as emphasized in the work by (Yüner, 2022), is recognized as a key driver for implementing educational reforms and achieving targeted educational outcomes. Principal leadership also plays a crucial role in determining and implementing effective school management practices, as highlighted by (Sunaengsih et al., 2019). Moreover, the effectiveness of school management is linked to the quality of school leadership, as noted by (Durrani et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of school management among primary school administrators is significantly influenced by various leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, and servant leadership. Transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates teachers towards a common vision, has been found to enhance organizational commitment (Asimiran et al., 2020). Combining transformational and transactional leadership styles further improves teacher commitment, underscoring the importance of diverse leadership approaches (Tran et al., 2023). Transactional leadership, focusing on supervision and performance, has been linked to improved teacher performance and work motivation (Akullo & Kamanyire, 2023; Adriansyah et al., 2020). Additionally, servant leadership, characterized by serving and promoting others' growth, reduces grievances and staff turnover, leading to higher teacher satisfaction (Igwe et al., 2017). These findings highlight the crucial role of leadership styles in fostering organizational commitment, teacher motivation, and overall school effectiveness. By integrating these leadership styles, school administrators can create a supportive and effective educational environment, enhancing outcomes for both teachers and students.

### **The Transformational Leadership Theory**

The dependent variable (DV) in this study is the priorities in effective school management, which include collaboration with principals, academic performance, and teachers' job satisfaction. Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transformational leadership to distinguish between leaders who foster strong motivational relationships with their followers and subordinates and those who prioritize transactional exchanges. In transformational leadership, the interaction aims to achieve goals through inspiration and motivation. The Transformational Leadership Theory, associated with James MacGregor Burns and Bernard Bass, is a leadership framework that emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes by developing a shared vision and empowering others (Eaton, 2024).

This theory focuses on the leader's ability to create a vision that resonates with followers, leading to increased engagement, commitment, and performance (Eaton, 2024).

Key assumptions of the Transformational Leadership Theory include the leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers through charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence (Eaton, 2024). Transformational leaders are expected to foster collaboration, innovation, and a shared vision among their team members, ultimately driving organizational success (Eaton, 2024).

This theory aligns well with the focus on leadership styles (servant, transformational, transactional) and priorities in effective school management (collaboration with the principal, academic performance, teachers' job satisfaction). Transformational leadership is known for inspiring and motivating followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes, developing a shared vision, and empowering others. This theory can provide valuable insights into how different leadership styles impact collaboration with the principal, academic performance, and teachers' job satisfaction in the context of effective school management.

## **Research Methodology**

### *Research Design*

The research design for this study was centered around a descriptive quantitative approach. The study involved the use of a survey design to collect data from a representative sample of primary school administrators aimed at exploring the relationship between leadership styles and priorities in effective school management among primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor.

## **Location and Population**

### *Location of Study*

The study was conducted in Klang, a city in Selangor, Malaysia. Klang was selected due to its status as one of Malaysia's deprived cities, necessitating focused research to enhance the quality of education. The city's primary schools provided a suitable setting for examining the relationship between leadership styles and effective school management.

## **Population**

The target population for this study comprised all public primary school administrators in Klang. There were 54 public primary schools in Klang, with approximately 216 administrators in total. Each school typically had one principal and at least three senior assistants. Data collection took place during the 2024-2025 school year, from early June 2024 to early July 2024.

## **Sampling**

### *Sample Size*

The sample size for this study was determined based on the population size of 216 administrators. According to Cochran's formula for sample size calculation and supported by Krejcie and Morgan's table, a sample size of 140 administrators was deemed sufficient for this study. This sample size was calculated to ensure a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

**Sampling Procedure**

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure that the sample accurately represented the population. Administrators from different primary schools in Klang were selected, considering the proportionate representation of principals and senior assistants. This method enhanced the generalizability of the study's findings. Questionnaires were distributed directly to the administrators in person and via an online link to facilitate easy response.

**Instrumentation**

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, designed to capture detailed information on demographics, leadership styles, and priorities in effective school management. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

Section A gathers socio-demographic data, including years of experience and age. Section B assesses leadership styles (servant, transformational, and transactional) using Likert scaled statements adapted from existing literature. For example, statements such as "School administrators prioritize the needs and growth of teachers and staff" (García-Martínez et al., 2020) and "The school administrator promotes a shared vision and fosters innovation among the staff" (Moolenaar et al., 2010) are used to evaluate servant and transformational leadership styles, respectively.

Section C evaluates priorities in effective school management through adapted statements focusing on academic performance, collaboration with the principal, and teachers' job satisfaction. Academic performance is examined using statements like "High academic performance enhances a school's reputation within the community" (Burgess et al., 2014), while collaboration with the principal is assessed with items such as "Collaborating with the principal is essential for fostering a positive school climate" (Rock et al., 2017). Teachers' job satisfaction is evaluated through statements like "Teacher job satisfaction significantly impacts the quality of teaching and student progress" (Terek et al., 2014). These adapted questionnaires aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different leadership styles influence key aspects of school management, contributing to the overall effectiveness and success of educational institutions.

**Validation and Reliability**

The draft questionnaires were tested in the presetting the questionnaires and feedback received on its construction and content. The questionnaire was first written in English, but since all the participants are Malaysian and Malay language is the formal language used in Malaysia, the instrument was translated into the Malay language. This involved the work of Bahasa Malaysia translator for the validity test. After that, the questionnaires were sent to two professionals in two different fields for another validity test who are the expert in Education Administration in UPM as well as one of the administrators in primary school in Klang. The research then was sent to Educational Research Application System (e-RAS) for approval of research to be conducted and the ministry granted the research to be safely conducted. Last but not least, the details of the research were submitted to JKEUPM (university association) along with e-RAS approval letter.



**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted with a small sample of 30 primary school administrators who were not part of the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The pilot study results indicated that the questionnaire had high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 for all sections.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive analysis provided a comprehensive overview of the key variables, the demographic characteristics of the school administrators, their leadership styles, and their management priorities using quantities and percentages. The levels of leadership styles and management priorities were determined using means and standard deviations (SD) to provide insights into the central tendencies and variability within the data.

Inferential statistical techniques were applied to test the relationship between leadership styles and priorities in effective school management. The primary analysis involved using SPSS to perform bivariate correlation tests. These tests assessed the relationship between leadership styles (servant, transformational, and transactional) and the priorities in effective school management (collaboration with the principal, academic performance, and teachers' job satisfaction). For this analysis, particularly when interpreting the relationship or correlation coefficient ( $r$  value) between variables, guidelines provided by scholars such as Cohen (1988) is used.

**Result***Administrators Demographics*

Results shown in Table 1 indicated that among the respondents 104 (72.2 %) were female and only 40 (27.8%) of them were male. The largest age group is 50-54 years, comprising 54 (37.5%) individuals. Followed by age group 45-49 years, with 35 respondents (24.3%) and age group 55-59, with 29 respondents (20.1%). The smallest age group is 40-44 years, with 26 respondents, (18.1%) of the sample. The cumulative percentage indicates that 79.9% of the respondents are below the age of 55, highlighting that a significant portion of the respondents falls within the younger age categories. Overall, the age distribution shows a balanced representation across the age groups, with the majority being under 55 years of age.

The distribution of years of experience among the respondents is detailed in Table 1. The largest group of respondents falls within the 0-4 years of experience category, with 71 individuals (49.3%). This indicates that nearly half of the respondents are relatively new in their roles, having less than five years of experience. The 10-14 years of experience category includes 16 respondents (11.1%). This is followed by the 15-19 years category, which has 8 respondents (5.6%). Overall, 93.8% of the respondents have less than 20 years of experience. The age distribution of the following this, the 5-9 years of experience group comprises 40 respondents (27.8%). When combined with the 0-4 years group, these two categories encompass 77.1% of the respondents, highlighting a significant concentration of individuals with less than ten years of experience.

Lastly, the group with 20 years and above of experience includes 9 (6.3%) respondents. This suggests that a small fraction of the respondents are highly experienced with two decades or more in their roles. The cumulative percentage for this group reaches 100%, completing the distribution.

In summary, the data shows that a substantial majority of the respondents, 77.1%, have less than ten years of experience, indicating a relatively young workforce in terms of experience. Conversely, only 6.3% of the respondents have over 20 years of experience, pointing to a smaller presence of highly experienced individuals within the sample.

Table 1  
*Demographic*

	Group	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	40	27.8
	Female	104	72.2
	Total	144	100.0
Age	40-44	26	18.1
	45-49	35	24.3
	50-54	54	37.5
	55-59	29	20.1
	Total	144	100.0
Years of experience	0-4 years	71	49.3
	5-9 years	40	27.8
	10-14 years	16	11.1
	15-19 years	8	5.6
	20 years and above	9	6.3
	Total	144	100.0

### Priorities in Effective School Management

Results in Table 2 indicated that, for the academic priorities, the mean score is 4.26 (SD 0.53). The scores range from a minimum of 3.0 to a maximum of 5.0, indicating a generally high level of importance placed on academic priorities by the respondents. Regarding collaborative efforts, the mean score is 4.54, (SD 0.41). The scores range from 3.86 to 5.0, suggesting that collaborative efforts are highly valued and consistently prioritized across the sample.

Teacher satisfaction scores have a mean of 4.42 (SD 0.39). The scores range from 4.0 to 5.0, indicating that teacher satisfaction is a critical priority with relatively low variability in responses. These statistics reflect the respondents' high prioritization of academics, collaboration, and teacher satisfaction in effective school management.

Table 2  
*Priorities in Effective School Management*

	N	M	SD
<b>Academic Performance</b>	144	4.26	0.53
<b>Collaboration with Principal</b>	144	4.54	0.41
<b>Teachers' Job Satisfaction</b>	144	4.42	0.39
<b>Overall</b>		4.40	0.44

### Leadership Styles

According to Table 3, servant leadership received the highest mean score of 4.54 (0.37) followed by transformational leadership with a mean score of 4.46 (0.41) and transactional leadership with mean score of 4.19 (0.38). These findings indicate that servant leadership is the most highly rated among the respondents and transactional leadership being rated the lowest.

Table 3  
*Leadership Styles*

	N	M	SD
Servant Leadership	144	4.54	0.37
Transformational Leadership	144	4.46	0.41
Transactional Leadership	144	4.19	0.38
<b>Overall</b>		4.39	0.38

### Relationship between Leadership Styles and Priorities in Effective School Management

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient between the leadership styles and priorities in effective school management. The findings show that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and priorities in effective school management ( $r = 0.784$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with a high positive strength.

Table 4

*Correlation between Leadership styles and priorities in effective school management*

	Priorities in Effective School Management	
	r	Sig.p
Leadership styles	0.784	<.001

Results in table 5 displays all the correlations between various leadership styles and priorities in effective school management. However, only those with high positive strength are reported. For transformational leadership, there is a strong positive correlation with collaboration with the principal, indicated by a correlation coefficient of  $r=0.77$  and a significance level of  $p<.01$ . This suggests a significant association between transformational leadership and the priority of principal collaboration.

Servant leadership shows an even stronger positive correlation with collaboration with the principal, with a correlation coefficient of  $r=0.86$  ( $p<.01$ ). These highlights the critical role of servant leadership in fostering principal collaboration. Transactional leadership is strongly correlated with teacher job satisfaction, as reflected by a correlation coefficient of  $r=0.67$  ( $p<.01$ ). This indicates a significant relationship between transactional leadership and the priority of maintaining high teacher job satisfaction.

Additionally, servant leadership is positively correlated with academic performance, with a correlation coefficient of  $r=0.48$  ( $p<.01$ ). This denotes a significant association between servant leadership and the emphasis on academic performance. Overall, the findings demonstrate strong and significant correlations between various leadership styles and key priorities in effective school management, underlining the importance of leadership approaches in influencing management outcomes.

Table 5

*Relationship between Leadership Styles and Priorities in Effective School Management*

		r	Sig.p
Servant Leadership	Collaboration with Principal	0.86**	0.00
	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	0.76**	0.00
	Academic Performance	0.48**	0.00
Transformational Leadership	Collaboration with Principal	0.77**	0.00
	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	0.75**	0.00

	Academic Performance	0.33**	0.00
Transactional Leadership	Collaboration with Principal	0.64**	0.00
	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	0.67**	0.00
	Academic Performance	0.44**	0.00

\*\* $p < 0.01$

### Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and priorities in effective school management among primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor. The results reveal significant correlations between different leadership styles and key management priorities, highlighting the critical role of leadership in shaping effective school management practices.

### Priorities in Effective School Management

The descriptive statistical analysis of the study data indicates that the priorities identified in effective school management were collaboration with the principal as the top priority followed by teachers' job satisfaction, and academic performance as the least prioritized by administrators in primary schools in Klang. This finding suggests that primary school administrators in Klang place the highest value on fostering strong collaborative relationships with principals.

These findings align with Kouali (2017), and Bryan et al (2017), which emphasize that collaboration with principals is crucial for enhancing school operations and student outcomes, as it leads to better decision-making and resource allocation. Shohib (2024), also underscores the importance of collaborative leadership, where principals engage staff in decision-making, which fosters a positive school climate and effective management. Moreover, Bakokonyane (2023) highlights that school leaders who prioritize collaboration with teachers and students create an environment that supports academic excellence, leading to improved instructional practices and student performance. Therefore, based on the study findings, it is evident that primary school administrators in Klang prioritize strong collaborative relationships with principals as foundational for effective school management. This is in line with the objectives of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM), which emphasizes the importance of enhancing the quality of education through effective leadership and management strategies.

Despite its undeniable importance, academic performance is ranked lower compared to collaboration with the principal and teachers' job satisfaction. This prioritization may reflect a broader understanding of what contributes to a successful and effective school environment.

One possible explanation for this lower prioritization is the recognition that academic performance is often the outcome of a well-functioning school system rather than a

standalone goal. In other words, stakeholders may perceive that focusing on foundational elements, such as strong leadership and high levels of teacher satisfaction, naturally leads to improved academic results. In this context, academic performance becomes a byproduct of effective management practices rather than the primary focus. This holistic approach suggests that when the right structures and support systems are in place, academic success will follow. Stakeholders recognize that a well-functioning school system, characterized by strong leadership, high levels of teacher satisfaction, and effective management practices, can naturally lead to improved academic outcomes (Sušanj et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the higher standard deviation associated with academic performance indicates a wider range of opinions on its importance and how it should be addressed. This variation may stem from different educational philosophies or priorities among stakeholders, with some placing greater emphasis on holistic development, including social and emotional learning, while others may prioritize academic achievements more heavily. This might also be the impact from discontinuation of the UPSR (Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah) exam, a significant assessment that was once a cornerstone of primary education in Malaysia. With the removal of this formal, nationwide examination, there may be a shift in how academic performance is perceived and prioritized by school administrators and a sudden increasing recognition of the importance of non-academic aspects of education. This is also highlighted in School-Based Assessment (PBS, 2019), a holistic assessment that evaluates cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional and spiritual), and psychomotor (physical) aspects.

### **Relationship between Leadership Styles and Priorities in Effective School Management**

Through this study, results reveal that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles possessed by the administrators and priorities in effective school management. Servant Leadership demonstrated the strongest correlations and the most prioritized across all priorities in effective school management. The correlation between servant leadership and collaboration with the principal was particularly high. In the context of educational institutions, servant leadership has been linked to increased collaboration between teachers and principals, leading to improved job satisfaction and overall school culture (Shula, 2023; Effendi, 2024). This style also showed a significant positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, servant leadership has been linked to reducing hindrance stressors, lowering burnout perceptions, and ultimately increasing job satisfaction among teachers (Westbrook et al., 2022). Transformational Leadership also showed strong positive relationships with the priorities in effective school management, particularly in collaboration with the principal and teachers' job satisfaction. Transactional Leadership showed moderate positive correlations with the least prioritized in effective school management. The relationship with collaboration with the principal and teachers' job satisfaction indicates that transactional leadership can also be effective, though to a lesser degree than servant and transformational leadership.

The correlations between different leadership styles (servant, transformational, and transactional) and academic performance, though positive, are lower compared to their impact on collaboration with the principal and teachers' job satisfaction. This can be explained by several factors. First, academic performance is affected by many things beyond leadership styles, such as students' backgrounds, teaching methods, and individual characteristics (Asimiran et al., 2020). Leadership styles like servant and transformational leadership often

focus more on building relationships and creating a supportive environment, which might not directly boost academic results (Ketra, 2023). Also, traditional measures of academic performance, like test scores, may not fully capture the broader development and creativity encouraged by these leadership styles, leading to lower correlations (Aruzie et al., 2018).

The relationship between transformational leadership and academic performance can be explained through Burns' transformational leadership theory. Transformational leaders, according to Burns, prioritize the holistic development of their followers, inspiring and motivating teachers to innovate and grow, and creating a supportive school environment (Eaton, 2024). This focus on long term growth, creativity, and engagement may not immediately result in improvements in academic performance as typically measured by metrics like test scores (Mwove, 2023). The complex influence of transformational leadership on academic outcomes suggests the importance of considering factors beyond simple correlations, such as emotional intelligence and organizational commitment (Baba et al., 2019). This complexity underscores the intricate relationship between transformational leadership practices and academic performance, highlighting the multifaceted nature of leadership's impact in educational settings. Following closely behind is teachers' job satisfaction. Satisfied teachers are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and committed to their work, which in turn contributes to a positive school culture and improved student outcomes.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study underscores the vital role of leadership styles in shaping effective school management practices among primary school administrators in Klang, Selangor, with a particular emphasis on collaboration with principals and teachers' job satisfaction. While academic performance is recognized, it is seen as a byproduct of a well-functioning school system rather than the primary focus. The findings suggest that servant and transformational leadership styles, which prioritize collaboration and a supportive school environment, are most effective in fostering strong relationships and enhancing school culture, even though their direct impact on academic outcomes may be less pronounced.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that school administrators continue to prioritize and strengthen collaborative leadership practices, particularly by fostering open communication and shared decision-making. Additionally, while maintaining a focus on holistic development, a balanced approach that also emphasizes academic performance should be pursued. Regular monitoring and evaluation of leadership practices, along with efforts to enhance teacher satisfaction and adapt to changes in educational assessments, will further support the effectiveness of school management and contribute to overall student success.

This study contributes to the understanding of how different leadership styles influence priorities in school management, particularly emphasizing the importance of collaboration and teacher satisfaction. It provides valuable insights for educational administrators to enhance school effectiveness by adopting leadership practices that foster a supportive and collaborative environment.

These findings can be used as a guide for planning school management strategies, ensuring that all administrators align with a shared vision and common goals. This unified approach will foster consistency and coherence in leadership practices, ultimately contributing to a more effective and collaborative school environment.

This study contributes to the existing knowledge by providing theoretical and contextual insights into the relationship between leadership styles and school management effectiveness. This concept expands upon existing leadership theories by highlighting the importance of maintaining a balanced and flexible leadership style within educational environments. In the given context, the study is in line with the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) and offers specific insights that can assist school administrators in enhancing their management practices. The research provides valuable guidance for policymakers and educators by addressing a gap in the literature. It emphasizes the important role of leadership in shaping educational outcomes and contributes to the development of more effective school management strategies in Malaysia.

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