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Principal Leadership Orientations in Vocational School Transformation: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Regional Public Service Agency Transition in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's transition of Vocational High Schools (VHS) to Regional Public Service Agency (RPSA) status demands strategic and adaptive principal leadership to optimize institutional performance and resource management. Yet persistent misalignment between administrative expectations and leadership practice undermines effective school transformation. This study examines the factor structure of principal leadership orientations during this transition using a quantitative design with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) applied to data from 316 purposively selected respondents in Indonesia. Three leadership orientation factors emerged: results focus, individual well-being, and team-oriented flexibility, with factor loadings ranging from 0.419 to 0.862, confirming construct validity. Findings underscore the need to strengthen principal competencies for effective RPSA implementation and inform leadership policy development, with longitudinal and mixed-method extensions recommended for future research.

Keywords: confirmatory factor analysis, leadership orientation, regional public service agency, school transformation, vocational schools

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education plays a crucial role in preparing a competitive workforce by equipping students with practical, industry-relevant skills that enhance employability (Iliescu et al., 2025). In this context, Indonesia's Vocational High Schools (VHS) offer structured, industry-based programs to support this goal (García-Botero et al., 2022; Quiroga-Garza et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, substantial quality gaps remain, as only 12% of vocational schools meet national eligibility standards, and VHS graduates continue to dominate unemployment statistics (Khurniawan et al., 2021c). This persistent unemployment reflects an enduring skills mismatch between school training and labor market demands (Cholik et al., 2021; Suharno et al., 2020), driven by limited industry collaboration, inadequate practical training, regional disparities, and imbalanced distribution of vocational education provision concentrated in general-skill sectors (Lee & Hong, 2025). These conditions underscore the need for more targeted vocational education policies, supported by further empirical research (Dummert, 2020; Dwiyono et al., 2024; Schmillen, 2019).

To address these challenges, the Indonesian government introduced the RPSA policy through Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 79 of 2018, providing vocational schools greater financial autonomy and enabling more efficient procurement of practical learning resources. The RPSA model seeks to enhance school management by fostering entrepreneurial competence, productivity, budget efficiency, and community engagement (Khurniawan et al., 2021a, 2021b), and is reinforced by Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020, which emphasizes the strategic importance of vocational education in strengthening national workforce competitiveness (Khurniawan et al., 2021c). Functionally, RPSA aligns with the School-Based Enterprise (SBE) model widely implemented in the United States, where authentic work environments enhance students' practical skills, leadership, and professional ethics (Chen, 2024; Thompson & Kwong, 2016).

South Kalimantan represents a strategic context for implementing the RPSA model due to its diverse economic potential in the energy, maritime, agribusiness, and creative economy sectors. As Indonesia's largest coal producer and a major logistics hub through Trisakti Port, the region requires a highly skilled workforce to sustain economic expansion. The provincial government's commitment is demonstrated by designating nine vocational schools as RPSA pilot institutions in 2022, supported by the view that government intervention and

entrepreneurial knowledge can foster enterprise development and regional economic growth (Saberi & Hamdan, 2019; Zada et al., 2021).

Despite growing attention to vocational school leadership and financial governance, empirical evidence on leadership orientation in the context of RPSA-driven organizational reform remains limited. This gap is particularly evident in South Kalimantan, where systemic transformation demands a clear understanding of the leadership competencies required to navigate governance changes. Accordingly, this study aims to identify the dimensions influencing principals' leadership orientation during the transition of vocational schools into RPSA in South Kalimantan Province. The guiding research question is: *"What dimensions influence the leadership orientation of school principals during the management transition of vocational schools into RPSA in South Kalimantan Province?"*.

The novelty of this study lies in its empirical examination of leadership orientation within a policy-driven school transformation framework, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. By developing and validating a factor structure specific to RPSA transition leadership, this study contributes to contingency leadership theory while offering practical insights for leadership development programs and vocational education policy design.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership is a critical determinant of institutional success, shaping the direction and outcomes of organizations and societies (Nacheva, 2026). In this context, the successful implementation of RPSA governance depends heavily on strong school leadership. Principals play a central role in managing the transition process, addressing emerging challenges, and ensuring the effective planning and execution of RPSA-based reforms (Sariakin et al., 2025; Sliwka et al., 2024). Their leadership critically influences school performance, change management, and the achievement of organizational goals (Dare & Saleem, 2022; Dhandapani & Kaur, 2026; Juharyanto et al., 2020). Principals must also demonstrate the ability to innovate, strengthen school quality, and generate revenue, competencies strongly linked to entrepreneurial leadership (Dami et al., 2022; Mas et al., 2021; Mas & Suking, 2020).

Within this governance transition, Fiedler's contingency leadership theory provides a relevant analytical lens by distinguishing people-oriented and task-oriented leadership orientations. People-oriented leaders emphasize relationships, teamwork, and member well-being, thereby enhancing coordination and engagement (Behrendt et al., 2017; Ceri-Booms, 2020; Piccolo & Moise, 2019). In contrast, task-oriented leaders focus on goal attainment and operational efficiency, strengthening organizational commitment and achievement motivation (Huynh & Hua, 2020; Ma et al., 2023). Both orientations are essential in fostering

a learning environment that supports human resource development (Mujtaba, 2023; Yildirim et al., 2021).

Given the complexity of implementing RPSA governance, principals require comprehensive competencies in leadership, budgeting, staff development, curriculum coordination, infrastructure management, financial administration, and community relations (Gunawan et al., 2021; Maisyaroh et al., 2021, 2024). Effective leaders must also exhibit self-efficacy and emotional intelligence to sustain school well-being and foster an environment conducive to continuous improvement (Al-Mahdy et al., 2022; Kutsyuruba et al., 2024; Musadad et al., 2022; Wiyono, 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

To address the research objectives and ensure systematic data acquisition, an appropriate methodological framework was required. This study employs a quantitative research method using a survey approach to collect data relevant to the research topic (Gürbüz, 2017). A cross-sectional survey design was applied, allowing data collection at a specific point in time. This design is considered suitable as it enables efficient measurement of variables across a large population within a limited timeframe while maintaining data accuracy and relevance.

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises all 1,122 teachers and educational staff in nine RPSA Vocational Schools located in South Kalimantan Province. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of institutions that met specific research relevant characteristics. Three RPSA vocational schools were selected, yielding 316 respondents. The selection criteria included: (1) designation as Centre of Excellence (CoE) Vocational Schools; (2) official recognition as RPSA institutions; and (3) a student enrollment exceeding 1,000.

Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher to focus on schools with comparable institutional status and scale, thereby enhancing the relevance and applicability of the findings. This sample size represents more than 30% of the total population and provides an approximate precision level of ±5% (Islam, 2018).

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire specifically designed to measure principals' leadership orientation using task-oriented (TO) and people-oriented (PO) indicators. It comprised 20 items in total, with 10 items representing each dimension, and utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Before data collection, the

instrument underwent a content validity assessment by two experts to ensure the relevance and representativeness of the items in measuring the intended constructs. In addition, internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of $\alpha = 0.93$, indicating a high level of reliability.

Data Collection Techniques

The researcher administered the questionnaire online via Google Forms, distributing it through WhatsApp groups comprising teachers and education staff, as well as through school administrative coordination networks. This approach facilitates user access, increased respondent coverage, and streamline the distribution process. During the implementation phase, appointed liaison personnel, primarily school principals at each study site, oversaw the data collection process and motivated participants to complete the questionnaire accurately within the designated timeframe.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) technique. CFA is a widely used technique for confirming theoretical models using empirical data, primarily used for assessing construct validity in psychometric studies (Alavi et al., 2020). The researcher applied CFA rather than Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) due to the established theoretical foundation of the leadership orientation constructs (Banks et al., 2018). Since the factor structure, comprising task-oriented and people-oriented leadership was predefined based on relevant literature, CFA was deemed more appropriate to test the model's construct (Banmairuroy et al., 2022; Greene et al., 2021).

This study employed CFA to examine the instrument's validity and reliability and to identify the underlying dimensions of principals' leadership orientation. The analysis process included multiple stages: *the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett's Test, Anti-Image Correlation analysis, Communalities, Total Variance Explained, Scree Plot, Factor Matrix,* and *Rotate Matrix*. The researcher conducted all statistical analyses using SPSS 27 software.

RESULTS

The sample in this study includes various demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, employment status, position, education level, subjects taught, and employment period. Table 1 describes the distribution of respondents. Most respondents were female (60.4%), with the largest age group being 30-39 years (35.4%). Most of the respondents were teachers (85.7%), 44% held civil servants status (PNS), and 80.7 % had a bachelor's degree (S1). This distribution indicates

that the respondents possess relevant backgrounds that provide insights about leadership orientation in VHS-RPSA context.

Table 1: Description of Respondent Distribution

Criterion	Details	Sum	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	125	39.6
	Female	191	60.4
Age	20-29 years old	61	19.3
	30-39 years old	112	35.4
	40-49 years old	80	25.3
	50-59 years old	61	19.3
	≥ 60 years old	2	.6
Employment Status	PNS	139	44.0
	PPPK	99	31.3
	Honorary	78	24.7
Position	Teacher	269	85.7
	Educational staff	45	14.3
Education	Diploma/D3	20	6.3
	Bachelor/S1	255	80.7
	Master/S2	41	13.0
Subject Teacher	General	187	59.2
	Vocational	129	40.8
Working Period	< 5 years	89	28.2
	5-10 years	74	23.4
	10-15 years	50	15.8
	15-20 years	50	15.8
	≥20 years	53	16.8

Note. PNS = Civil Servant, *PPPK* = Government Employees with Employment Agreements.

The reliability analysis showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.931, indicating a very high level of internal consistency. This value reflects that the items in the instrument are consistently interconnected and effectively measure the same concept, confirming the instrument's reliability for this study. The factor analysis results demonstrate that the data is suitable for further exploration. Based on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, the value of 0.931 falls into the "outstanding" category, indicating a sufficiently strong correlation pattern among variables to produce a stable factor. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a Chi-Square value of 4448.569 with df = 190

and a significance level of $p < 0.001$, confirming that the correlations among variables are adequate for factor analysis, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO (MSA)	Chi-Square	Sig
0.931	4448.569	.000

Note. KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, *MSA* = Measures of Sampling Adequacy.

The Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) on the diagonal of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had values above 0.5, indicating that they were sufficiently representative for factor analysis. The highest MSA values were found in the TO8 (0.958) and PO10 (0.966) variables, demonstrating an excellent match. Although lower than other variables, PO7 (0.701) and PO8 (0.761), still met the matching criteria. The commonalities value provides insight into how well the extracted factors explain the variability of each variable (Table 3). High communalities in variables such as PO7 (0.761) and PO4 (0.755) indicate that the extracted factors explain most of their variability. Conversely, variables with low communalities, such as TO1 (0.265) and TO2 (0.403), are less well explained by the extracted factors. The Rotated Component Matrix (Table 4) shows the TO and PO variables distribution across three main components produced through factor analysis.

Table 3: Communalities Value

Variable	Extraction	Variable	Extraction
TO1	0.265	PO1	0.747
TO2	0.403	PO2	0.719
TO3	0.653	PO3	0.619
TO4	0.666	PO4	0.755
TO5	0.576	PO5	0.704
TO6	0.577	PO6	0.662
TO7	0.694	PO7	0.761
TO8	0.713	PO8	0.677
TO9	0.736	PO9	0.590
TO10	0.732	PO10	0.719

Note. TO = Task Oriented, *PO* = People Oriented.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

Variable	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
TO1		0.419	
TO2		0.613	
TO3		0.754	
TO4	0.559	0.588	
TO5		0.717	
TO6		0.732	
TO7		0.745	
TO8	0.539	0.649	
TO9	0.647	0.563	
TO10	0.539	0.665	
PO1	0.783		
PO2	0.770		
PO3	0.712		
PO4	0.826		
PO5	0.756		
PO6	0.794		
PO7			0.862
PO8			0.793
PO9	0.687		
PO10	0.755		

Note. Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations, *TO* = Task Oriented, *PO* = People Oriented.

The first component is dominated by PO variables (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5, PO6, PO9, and PO10), which have high factor loadings (above 0.6). Therefore, the researcher can interpret this component as a dimension of the PO (people-oriented) aspect. The second component includes TO variables (TO3, TO5, TO6, and TO7), which also strongly correlate with these components, illustrating the main TO-focused (task-oriented) dimension. The third component reflects the multidimensional nature of several variables (TO4, TO8, TO9, TO10, and PO7 and PO8), which have significant correlations with more than one component. This result indicates a complex interaction between the TO and PO dimensions, providing new insights into leadership dynamics in VHS-RPSA.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSSIONS

The discussion elaborates on the principal leadership dimensions identified in this study, linking empirical findings with relevant theoretical frameworks and prior research to explain their implications for the RPSA transition in vocational high schools.

Principal Leadership Dimensions

The results of the study show that the leadership orientation of the principal significantly influences the success of the transition of vocational schools to RPSA. Research shows that principal behaviors significantly enhance student achievement, teacher well-being, instructional practices, and school organizational health, emphasizing the need for investment in school leadership capacities (Hallinger et al., 2025; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Saleem et al., 2026). Additionally, principal leadership, along with socioeconomic and cultural context, plays a vital role in shaping school success by influencing academic outcomes, fostering innovation, and enhancing school recognition (González-Falcón et al., 2020). Moreover, leadership styles, including communication and management approaches, directly impact parent-school engagement, as parents rely on these factors to establish and maintain relationships with schools (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Cummins & Patel, 2025).

Leadership orientation generally falls into two categories: task-oriented and people-oriented styles. Task-oriented leaders tend to prioritize conflict management strategies, people-oriented leaders exhibit greater accommodating, with younger principals showing higher adaptability in leadership practices (Aravidou et al., 2025; To et al., 2021). However, the study identified three key factors influencing the leadership orientation of school principals in State VHSs in South Kalimantan Province during the transition into RPSA. Each factor is characterized by distinct attributes, and the loading factor values serve as key indicators of leadership orientation.

The first factor, leadership oriented toward achieving targets and team well-being, highlights the balance between work outcomes and the employee welfare. Indicators such as TO5 (0.717) and PO4 (0.826) confirm that effective leaders can motivate their teams by providing incentives and addressing individual needs. This leadership style is crucial in RPSA management, as it ensures operational efficiency and staff well-being, and is essential in VHSs implementing governance. Research indicates that high task-oriented behavior enables principals to initiate work, direct team members toward goals, and monitor performance (Booms et al., 2017; Botha & Aleme, 2023). Moreover, task-oriented leadership enhances efficiency and fosters social harmony (Rajbhandari, 2017). Among these behaviors, problem-solving is critical for managerial effectiveness (Yukl et al., 2019), aligning with RPSA priorities such as budget management and production

unit optimization. RPSA governance advances school autonomy and performance, while leadership efficacy depends on tailored financial and non-financial motivation strategies (Drouvelis et al., 2017; Soleas, 2020).

The second factor, challenging and flexible leadership, refers to leaders who set ambitious goals while remaining adaptable to their team's needs. For instance, indicator PO7 (0.862) highlights the importance of a leader's ability to adjust work schedules and operational strategies based on team conditions. This flexibility drives optimal performance while ensuring staff well-being, creating a responsive, goal-oriented environment (Xu & Pan, 2022). Leaders balance organizational goals with the evolving needs of their teams (Zhu & Jin, 2023). Studies suggest that flexible and adaptive leadership through communication, support, and dynamic culture, enhances team performance and employee well-being (Baron et al., 2018; Solberg et al., 2022). The findings align with Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey et al., 1979), which emphasizes leaders adapting style based on followers' competence and commitment levels. Principals in VHSs cultivate innovation, adaptability, and relevance, in response to changing educational landscapes (Alzouebi et al., 2025; Corrigan & Merry, 2022; Sutarni et al., 2022). Furthermore, research highlights that while goal clarity and self-management enhance team performance, their impact does not necessarily decrease teamwork dynamics (Chiu et al., 2016; van der Hoek et al., 2016).

The third factor, high-performance pressure, emphasizes individual satisfaction while maintaining high-quality work results and ensuring team members feel valued and supported. This balance is reflected in loading values such as TO7 (0.745) and PO8 (0.793), which illustrate an approach that combines rigorous performance expectations with measures to enhance individual satisfaction. A key component of this framework is people-oriented leadership, which prioritizes harmonious relationships with staff, students, and stakeholders. This aligns with the core tenets of Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1981), emphasizing individualized consideration and inspirational motivation as key dimensions of effective leadership. Transformational leaders inspire followers to exceed expectations by addressing their needs and aligning personal goals with organizational visions (Bakker et al., 2023).

School principals can sustain motivation and commitment among team members by fostering this strategic equilibrium, even under demanding work conditions (Yalçınkaya et al., 2021). The three leadership factors offer a comprehensive framework for school principals to navigate the complexities of RPSA transformation, ensuring institutional success and team well-being. A key component of this framework is people-oriented leadership, which prioritizes harmonious relationships with staff, students, and stakeholders (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Research has demonstrated that fostering a conducive work environment boosts individual and organizational performance (Dwiyono et al., 2023), while

people-oriented management in modern education promotes student subjectivity and personality development (Petrova et al., 2023).

Furthermore, people-oriented behavior is crucial for job satisfaction, as it fosters a conducive work environment that enhances individual and organizational outcomes. Trust, respect, and empowerment strategies improve employee productivity, performance, and loyalty (Liu & Ren, 2022; Zhenjing et al., 2022). Moreover, a people-oriented leadership style reduces stress and improves job performance (Çekmecelioğlu & Yıkılmaz, 2019), while relationships and emotional support foster job satisfaction and workplace harmony (Bakotić & Bulog, 2021). Thus, integrating high-performance expectations with a people-oriented approach allows school principals to effectively lead educational institutions, ensuring team well-being and motivation.

Demographic Characteristics

The study reveals that sociodemographic factors, such as age, education, and work experience significantly impact leadership effectiveness, with higher education, age, and work experience positively correlated with relationship-orientation leadership (Kumareswaran et al., 2024). Additionally, personality traits significantly shape leadership styles, as the Big Five personality traits significantly influence transformational leadership sub-dimensions and leader performance (Deinert et al., 2015). Moreover, national culture profoundly affects leadership orientation, shaping attitudes toward social orientations, goal-setting, and uncertainty avoidance (Miska et al., 2018).

Given the strong influence of leadership orientation on school outcomes, examining how demographic characteristics and competencies shape principal leadership in the RPSA framework is crucial. Strong and effective leadership is essential for successfully implementing RPSA in vocational schools, as leadership orientation significantly impacts its effectiveness. Analyzing principals' demographic characteristics and competencies provides valuable insights into dominant leadership patterns. Research underscores the link between leadership, teacher roles, and demographics, highlighting collaboration for vocational education advancement (Badawi et al., 2024). Specifically, principals aged 41-50 with lower formal education tend to be less participative and collaborative, whereas those with more experience and higher education degrees demonstrate greater effectiveness in managing school resources (Campos-García & Zúñiga-Vicente, 2020; Owan et al., 2024).

In addition to education and experience, gender and age distribution is also crucial in shaping leadership dynamics within VHSs into RPSA. Most respondents in this study are women, reflecting gender representation in leadership at VHS-RPSA. Additionally, most teachers and support staff are 30-39 years, which indicates their productive years, promoting dynamic and innovative decision-making (Brouhier et al., 2021). These demographic characteristics influence

leadership styles and the school's capacity to foster innovation. Research shows that principal leadership significantly influences teaching staff innovation, fostering collective creativity among teachers, an essential factor for successful school improvement (Buske, 2018). Furthermore, innovative school leaders identify five key leadership traits necessary for institutional success, highlighting the relationship between management style, life experiences, and other contextual factors that shape leadership practices in specific school areas (Nebieridze, 2023).

A well-structured and competent workforce is important to ensure the successful transition of VHSs into RPSA. Employment status significantly influences job stability, professional development opportunities, school management effectiveness, and instructional quality. Most of the respondents in this study are civil servants (PNS), indicating greater job security than government employees with employment agreements (PPPK) and honorary staff. However, the significant involvement of PPPK and honorary employees highlights the need for equitable training and competency development across all employment categories to maintain high educational standards. Research shows that a competency-based training management model effectively enhances teachers' skills and provides an innovative approach for continuous professional development (Sherly et al., 2023). Furthermore, establishing a sustainable training policy is essential to ensure that all employees can contribute optimally to the successful RPSA implementation. In this regard, complementary assessment becomes a critical tool in training programs for teachers and school leaders, helping to strengthen their competencies and facilitate students' integration into society (Nutov et al., 2021).

Moreover, most respondents had a Bachelor's degree (S1), indicating a strong academic foundation that supports their professional responsibilities. Prior research highlights the broader benefits of higher education, demonstrating its positive impact on cognitive performance across all age groups, with specific cognitive domains experiencing more excellent enhancement (Guerra-Carrillo et al., 2017). Furthermore, higher education is associated with increased trust, greater political engagement, improved health and well-being, reduced political cynicism, and more positive intergroup attitudes (Easterbrook et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the dominance of general subject teachers over vocational teachers underscores the need for stronger collaboration to ensure seamless integration in implementing the RPSA-based curriculum. Studies indicate that promoting teacher collaboration enhances student academic performance (García-Martínez et al., 2021) and contributes to the coherence of curriculum implementation in successful schools (Muckenthaler et al., 2020). Additionally, teachers' diverse work experiences are crucial in improving RPSA policy implementation, as their varied professional backgrounds influence their ability to adapt to policy changes (Goodson & Ümarik, 2019). This adaptability is essential in executing VHS-RPSA policies, ensuring that teachers can effectively address the challenges and complexities of the transition process.

This study reinforces the critical role of principals' leadership in ensuring the successful transition of vocational schools to the RPSA governance model. Effective principals integrate task-oriented and people-oriented leadership approaches, enabling them to meet performance targets while cultivating a supportive organizational climate. The identified leadership orientation dimensions, focus on work results, attention to individual well-being, and flexibility in meeting team needs, highlight the importance of balancing productivity with staff motivation to sustain school improvement.

The findings further suggest that demographic characteristics and leadership competencies should be considered in designing development programs for school principals. Tailored capacity-building strategies can strengthen managerial effectiveness and interpersonal skills needed during organizational transformation. Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs, expand comparative analyses across regions, and explore interactions between principal leadership, teacher agency, student achievement, and community involvement to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of RPSA implementation.

IMPLICATIONS

Notably, this study's dominance of people-oriented leadership warrants further critical analysis. Indonesian society's collectivist values may influence this preference, prioritizing harmony and interpersonal relationships over assertiveness and hierarchy. The transitional challenges of RPSA governance in an organizational context may prompt principals to adopt relational strategies to manage uncertainty and maintain staff morale. Policy factors such as decentralized management and accountability measures could also incentivize leaders to foster trust and collaboration among school stakeholders. Future studies should delve deeper into these contextual variables to better understand their influence on leadership preferences.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias, as responses may be subject to social desirability or misinterpretation. Second, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality or examine how leadership orientation evolves during the RPSA transition. Third, the study is confined to public vocational schools in South Kalimantan, which may not represent broader national or private sector contexts, thereby limiting the generalizability of findings.

Future research should consider longitudinal approaches to capture changes in leadership practices across different stages of RPSA implementation. Moreover, triangulating survey data with qualitative interviews or observational

methods can enrich the analysis and reduce bias. Comparative studies across regions or countries would also be valuable for understanding how cultural and policy environments shape leadership dynamics. Finally, future inquiries should explore how principal leadership interacts with teacher agency, student outcomes, and community involvement to produce sustainable school improvement under the RPSA model.

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